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ANGELA.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“EMILIA WYNDHAM,” “TWO OLD MEN’S TALES,” &c.

* * * *

No common object to your sight displays,
But what with pleasure Heaven itself surveys:
A brave heart struggling with the storms of fate.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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ANGELA.

CHAPTER I.

Still raise for good the supplicating voice,
But leave to Heaven the measure and the choice ;
Safe in His mind, whose eye discerns afar
The secret ambush of a specious prayer.

JOHNSON.

THE coach stopped at the Angel at Islington. And here, amid a noisy, brawling, bustling, crowd of porters, carters, hostlers, and travellers, men, women, and children, while Nurse took care of the little ones, who were crying with weariness and hunger, Angela stood looking after her luggage, elbowed, jostled, and pushed about, and her questions answered with all the rude, negligent insolence, with which the traveller of in-

ferior condition finds him or *her* self—for I am sorry to say there is no difference—greeted upon these occasions.

Nothing, in fact, I am grieved to remark, can be more rough, not to say brutal, than the manners the worthy people of England too often allow themselves to adopt in such circumstances. Any thing like gentleness, or respect, to those who are for the moment in their power, they seem to think it beneath them to practise. Any thing approaching to that politeness which regards the sex—that old-fashioned politeness now rarely to be met with, except among quite old men—seems never to enter their heads. A young woman—a young lady—is hunted and pushed up and down; her soft and gentle voice, as she asks for her things, rudely answered, or more rudely disregarded. The people of England seem to have no notion of a lady out of her own carriage; no respect for timidity, gentleness, and feebleness, on a railway platform, or outside the coach.

How unlike the pleasing gallantry which used once to distinguish our neighbours towards the sex! But they, too, have forgotten their gentle manners, I fear, in a great measure now, and have learned to be as rude and rough as those English whom they dislike so much.

How painful is this first experience of the rude disregard of her innocence and gentleness, which

she will have to meet in her battle with life, to a young girl, reared from her infancy under the tenderest protection, and accustomed to look for all those little observances which women receive when connected with gentlemen! As the daughter of an officer, she had been used to meet with attention and respect from all with whom she had to do.

Now she stands in the crowded street alone, vainly endeavouring to engage the attention of the coachman, who has hundreds of packages to deliver, to obtain her goods, and carry away these poor, little, crying children, to their supper and their bed.

A drizzling rain was beginning to fall, and rendered her feelings still more discouraging and dismal, while her head and limbs, unaccustomed to and little formed to endure, the fatigue of a day's journey such as this in a close small coach, with one and sometimes two children upon her lap, were aching intolerably.

At last, the coachman deigned to listen to the "young woman," as he styled her, and her boxes were thrown to her upon the pavement.

Old, old boxes they were, little formed to command respect. Few coachmen, porters, or hackney-coachmen, in the world would think a person worth attention to whom such poverty-stricken property belonged.

And now she had to call a coach, but there was not one to be had.

At last, for a shilling, a person offered to get her one; and presently he returned with one of those horrible, dirty, disgusting old vehicles, which for so long disgraced the largest metropolis in the world.

A most heavy disgrace it is to this our England, that the comforts of mediocrity are so contemptuously disregarded; however, to own the truth, there is considerable improvement as regards our cabs, in cleanliness at least—thanks to the railroads.

The heavy vehicle came rumbling along, driven by an ill-looking man, in a dirty, ragged, whity-brown great coat, and drawn by two miserable skeletons of horses; the steps were broken, and the door dilapidated; the inside, filthy in the extreme.

She turned almost sick at the idea of entering it; but the rain began to fall heavily, the children cried, Nurse scolded—she was glad to find shelter anywhere.

“Where to? and is that the luggage?” as it was hoisted up with a contemptuous sort of carelessness.

“To —— Street, Westminster, not very far from Westminster Bridge;” and the miserable vehicle began to totter, and rattle slowly along.

The coachman took his way through various obscure streets, the abodes of misery and vice, sordid and negligent poverty, slovenliness, disorder, and dirt.

Was this London?

Was this where she was to abide? Was this the form that Poverty assumed in London? Was this its aspect when excluded from the sweet communion with Nature—that communion which almost atones for every privation?

“These dismal shades for that celestial light?”

She had a vivid imagination, a lively sense of the beautiful, something almost approaching to a passion for symmetry and order, and the most acute susceptibility to external impressions.

Discordant sounds, unpleasing sights, were to her a perfect martyrdom. The dark, dismal streets, defiled, not washed by the slopping rain; the dirty children running home with their rough tangled hair and degraded faces; the lines of ragged clothes hanging high overhead in the air upon cords that crossed the streets; the rumbling of carts, filled with all sorts of unsightly cargoes; the cries and rude noises; the smell, the hubbub; and, above all, the dingy obscurity of smoky twilight which darkened every thing, combined to produce an impression the most deeply depressing, the most hopelessly dis-

couraging, that she had ever in her life experienced. Much sorrow, much privation, much hardship even, she had known; but what was all she had ever known to this?

What were her former privations—privations, softened by the tenderness of those around her, and cheered by the sweet influences of home, compared to her feelings, thus tossed—poor, delicate vessel!—upon the dark heaving surges of this vast ocean of human society?

She felt herself lost—an atom—less, a mere point, in this immensity of being; yet, alas, how painfully sensitive still! Even her faith, for the moment, seemed to desert her. She felt as if lost, forgotten, amid the mass of being in its lowest state of degradation which surrounded her.—She almost could have doubted of the all-seeing providence of God, as the way wound through these endless, endless streets; these lines and lines of crowded human dwellings, all, as it were, forsaken of light, forgotten in their wretchedness and their misery. A dark cloud, like that confused and blackened cloud of smoke and fog—ah, how unlike the soft, gentle rain from heaven!—seemed to rise between her and her Creator. Her last fortress was as if invaded—her last stay and support seemed about to give way.

She sat pale, terrified, bewildered; her head aching, her poor heart failing her, watching street

after street, and her spirits sinking and sinking as they passed along.

Such is the effect which the exterior of these wretched portions of the great city is apt to produce upon the young inexperienced heart—a despondency amounting to despair, a disgust and a distrust approaching almost to infidelity. But let not the soul bewilder itself with this mournful view of things; let not the imagination, disgusted with this painful exterior, believe that it altogether takes a just estimate of the reality.

Blessed be God, all is not dark in this distress; all is not mere suffering in these abodes of apparent misery. The human heart is still to be found there, and love and virtue enlighten many a miserable dwelling. Then there is some compensation in the free communion of thought, the interchanges of society, which subsist between man and man. Then there is habit—that custom of the sense which accommodates itself to so much.

Compensation!—compensation!—such is the constitution of humanity.

The Almighty provides compensations where absolute blessings are denied.

And people are often both better and happier than they appear.

Let us comfort ourselves with this in our hours of despondency; but let us not the less labour

and earnestly labour, to sweep this foul blot on our system away.

At last the time seems coming when a new dawn shall arise, and the "great light" shall penetrate to these long-lost and degraded ones.

These narrow alleys, and these close, dark streets—these gloomy dens of wretchedness and vice, shall be purified. Railway courses, in vast channels, have done something in carrying light and air, which are the first necessary conditions of wholesome life, into these hidden corners. Streets are being levelled, nests of misery rooted out, and every new house, as it arises in the place of others thrown down, is evidently calculated for a happier and more orderly population than the preceding one. The filth, and the misery, and the pollution, and the abominations of darkness, become exposed to the eye of all, leading all to unite in the endeavour to clear it away.

It was some few years ago when Angela entered London, and things were still in this respect much as they had been for centuries.

And it happened that the hackney-coachman took her through some of the very worst parts of the town.

At last, however, they reached Westminster, and entered a large, wide, but very ugly street, near Tothill Fields; and after proceeding some

little way, turned into one very much narrower, and very much more gloomy, composed of small, mean-looking houses, built of dark brick, with sash-windows, dirty, narrow, and low.

They stopped at a little, low grocer's shop, in
— Street.



“ In this world ye shall have affliction ; but be of good courage, I have overcome the world.”

Those who have experienced that inner life of the soul, grounded not upon a religion of their own invention, wavering and vacillating with every turn of imagination and thought, but fed and nourished with that real, substantial, bread of life provided for His servants by the Great Master, will have often experienced the comfort which an isolated text, suddenly borne in, as the apt expression is, upon the soul, produces.

As the coach stopped at this mean and dismal-looking dwelling, these words rang in Angela's ears as if an angel had uttered them ; and she

descended at the threshold of her new abode, already strengthened and comforted.

It was a small, dark, obscure shop, where the commoner articles of general consumption — such as tea, sugar, candles, starch, soap, and so forth — were sold.

The windows were so small, the ceiling of the room so low, the little apartment with its one dark, narrow counter, so confined, and the wares to be sold so unpleasing in their exterior — to say nothing of a strong smell of tallow — that it afforded a painful contrast to the dazzling stores and shops which adorn the other and more privileged quarters of the town. These districts, indeed, may be considered quite as towns apart, contrasting painfully with the other portions of our magnificent metropolis.

There was nobody in the shop when they arrived but one woman and a young and very slovenly looking shop-boy.

The woman was, of course, their future hostess.

Angela looked at her with anxiety.

She was a thin, spare, rather delicate-featured woman, of the middle size, erect and somewhat stiff in her carriage, though her face was pale and sickly, and her countenance anxious and unhappy; however, she looked gentle and not at all alarming.

She came round the counter, kissed and em-

braced her cousin the old Nurse, saluted Angela, called the children "little dears," and gave them, in short, so cordial a reception, that Angela felt already relieved; and it, in some degree, compensated for the feeling of oppression and disgust with which she looked round upon the dirty narrow street, with its opposite houses almost excluding the light, and the confined and miserable aspect of the one she was to occupy.

Human kindness, like the divine mercy, can brighten the meanest dwelling.

Mrs. Levet, for that was the good woman's name, had a manner such as the upper servants in large and wealthy families acquire;—at once civil and dignified—for they are habituated to command as well as to obey—and find exercise at once for the principles of reverence and authority.

Like many of her class, she had invested the savings of a servitude of between thirty and forty years in this little shop; and in this small dark house, like many of her class also — (to the surprise of those who contrast the luxury and indulgence of their former lives with the sordid privations of the present)—she lived apparently contented, the contrast compensating in her eyes by the sweets of independence.

No doubt independence must be very sweet, and service, in general, very irksome, or we

should not so constantly see this exchange so cheerfully, nay, so rejoicingly, made.

Whether, like most other servants who adopt this plan of life, she would, through her ignorance of business, sink all her little capital in unsuccessful traffic, leaving nothing for her old age but a return to service, or an asylum in some almshouse, remained to be proved.

The care-worn face would seem to imply that she was already entering that hopeless labyrinth called "getting into difficulties;" but it might be, that her troubles and exertions in the different nurseries she had superintended had traced these lines.

The children had fallen asleep in the coach, and had been lifted out only half awake. They turned their winking, drowsy eyes around, and wondered, poor little things, where they could be come to. They had very sublime ideas of a shop, and especially of a counter, as of some mysterious, privileged place, behind which they had never been allowed to penetrate.

The idea of going *behind* the counter had, therefore, something very exciting in it; and their surprise and astonishment kept them silently observing all that passed, as, taking them one in each hand, Nurse carrying in her arms the still sleeping baby, Mrs. Levet led the way along a very dark, narrow passage, and up

the equally dark and narrow stairs, with which it was terminated, and by which they ascended to their future home.

The apartments consisted of three small rooms ; a little sitting-room, which looked to the street, and two small bed-rooms behind. In one of these, Nurse prepared to establish herself with the two little boys ; Angela and the little girl were to occupy the other.

The back of the house looked upon a small court, surrounded with houses, still more miserable than those in front. They looked very close and very dirty ; one soot-dyed elm-tree grew in a corner spot : that and a little square of blue sky—now not blue, indeed, but of a melancholy ochry grey—was all that was left discernible of that nature which she had so passionately loved.

Her head was aching, and her heart was aching, poor thing ; but she had fortitude, submission, and patience.

The furniture of the rooms they now entered was sordid and mean in the extreme. A small square of Scotch red and black carpet in the middle of the sitting-room, and six small and two *arm*, not *easy*, chairs, a little card-table on rickety legs between the windows, and curtains of a sort of dark brown stuff.

The bed-rooms were, if possible, still more uncomfortable looking. The walls had been

newly covered with a cheap green paper, it is true, and looked clean and almost bright ; but then the paper, like other green papers of this cheap description, emitted a most sickly smell. The beds were hung with a checked woollen stuff ; and there were in each room two rush-bottomed chairs, a small corner washing-stand, and an old mahogany chest, serving also for a table, which smelled villanously, as old furniture in London does.

Such was the lodging, with firing included, provided by fifty guineas a-year.

Angela could not look round without disgust, and dismay, and disappointment, but she strove to conceal every symptom of these feelings, and putting her two little charges upon one arm-chair, kissed them, and told them they were very good little children, and that they should soon have tea and cake, if they would not cry and be naughty, and so on.

She felt more for the poor little wearied things than for herself, though, happily, little beings of that age are almost insensible to the power of those outward circumstances which affect ourselves so much.

But while Angela was thus employing herself, endeavouring not only to appear, but to feel, contented, Nurse gave full vent to her complaints.

While Mrs. Levet was in the room (for even Nurse had some feelings of propriety), she con-

tented herself with walking about, the baby in her arms, sniffing the air with a look of magnificent contempt; but no sooner had Mrs. Levet disappeared, going down, good-naturedly, to hasten tea for the poor little children, than she burst out, and gave vent to her disappointment in no measured terms.

“A pretty dog-hole this, indeed, to bring us to! I never, in all my born days, was in such a place! And it stinks like pison—enough to pison you, every one of you, my darlings! Why, Miss Angela, what would the Captain say if he could look down and see to what a pass you’ve come at last? And my poor mistress! Little did she think, poor thing, when she went off like a lamb at that farmhouse—I thought *that* but a poor place, but it was a heaven upon earth to this—little did she think where her poor babies were to be harboured next! Why, my cousin Levet must be bewitched to let us come to such a den! And who’d, indeed, have thought of cousin Levet, who was so well to do in the world, and used to have things so handsome about her, filling her rooms with such nasty pawnbroker’s stuff as this! It’s a perfect cheat and deception as ever I saw; and I’ll tell her a piece of my mind about it when she comes up again, as sure as her name’s Sarah.”

Poor Angela! Nurse’s temper made every thing so much worse. Her very affection for

herself, and warm interest in the welfare of the children, was thus rendered a source of perpetual annoyance to this young creature, who seemed fated to have every description of evil, small as well as great, accumulated round her youthful head.

But youth is heroic and pious; and heroism and piety are like bright-armed angels, ready to guard and to defend.

It was become like a second nature with her, instead of looking for support in her difficulties or privations from Nurse, to find every thing aggravated by her ill-humour.

There are thousands and thousands of all classes by the way, who, though possessed of kind hearts, and good, and generous, nay, benevolent dispositions in the main, yet having never been taught from childhood the cardinal virtue of restraining and governing the tongue, make those who live with them endure an almost daily martyrdom from the indulgence of their testy humours.

Angela was terrified at the idea of a new scene of intestine war, equal in violence to those she had often witnessed with Mrs. Whitwell, and from which the smallness of her present abode would render it impossible to escape; besides, she had already seen what she thought expressed kindness of intention, nay, more, real sympathy, in the countenance of Mrs. Levet, and she dreaded

the diminution of such amiable feelings in one upon whose good will so much of their happiness must depend.

“I beseech you, dear Nurse,” laying her hand upon her arm, “do no such thing. It is not Mrs. Levet’s fault if she is not rich enough to put better things into her rooms; and, besides, what *does* it signify?”

“I can’t think what makes her so poor: Why, only look!” said Nurse, turning her disdainful eyes around; “did you ever see such a carpet, and such chairs, and such a nasty, ricketty thing as this table?” spurning at it with her foot. “Why, Miss Angela, when I went to see her first, after she had left service, and just before she married Tom Levet, Mr. Darby’s head groom as was, it was quite a little paradise of a place she lived in, for she’d the cottage at the lodge at Donnington. She’d a quantity of real good furniture; and who’d have thought but she’d have put some of it in her first-floor lodging? And I must say it’s the meanest trick that I ever knew, and quite unlike Sarah Levet that used to be. And as for not telling her of it, she and I have been as sisters ever since we were born; and it would be strange, indeed, if I might not tell *her* how badly I’m thinking of her.”

Very good Nurse! do, like hundreds of others,

indulge those who have been as sisters to you ever since you were born with your rude, rough truths, as you call them, and spare strangers; it is the usual way.

“I dare say,” said Angela, “if Mrs. Levet has more comfortable things, she will, if you will let me speak to her myself, allow us a few of them, and make this room look a little prettier and more comfortable. But pray, pray, dear Nurse, let us put it off till to-morrow, and think of nothing but getting the children’s tea and to bed.”

Nurse, as usual, paid not the slightest attention to this remonstrance; but upon Mrs. Levet appearing with the teaboard, began with,—

“Well, cousin, I must congratulate you upon the appearance of the rooms. I think I never was lodged in such a palace before in my life—all silks and damasks to be sure! And what’s a guinea a-week for such grandeur? But I’ve a little bird asks me, what’s become of all that good furniture you had at Donnington? I thought for sure we should find a *leetle* morsel of it here; but I suppose you have kept it all for your own rooms above?”

Mrs. Levet coloured, and sighed, and only said,

“No, Anne; you may go up stairs, if you please, and look at my room.”

Her answer, and something sorrowful in her look, mollified Nurse in some degree; but she went on:—

“I should never have thought of recommending your lodgings to Miss Angela—to Captain Nevil’s eldest daughter, cousin, if I’d thought what a nasty, mean sort of a place you kept in. Why, Sarah, I remember when you were at Donnington, living there in the lodge, and before you married Tom Levet, that there was nobody was handsomer off, and had better surroundings, than yourself.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. Levet, “it was very different then, Anne, to be sure;” and she sighed again. Then turning to Angela she said, in a tone of deprecation,—“I hope you will excuse my poverty, miss; I did not mean to deceive you; I did not think about it as I ought to have done perhaps: it’s a poor place I own; but what can you get for a guinea a-week?”

“A guinea a-week!” cried Nurse; “why, I call it a fortune! And, besides, what’s this horrid stink? I’m sure it’ll pison the children. You in the nursery all your life, and think of putting such little ones where there’s such a death-like smell! I do wonder at you, Sarah.”

“I was unfortunate about the paper,” said Mrs. Levet, again addressing Angela. “I chose it because I thought it looked light and grey, and

countryfied ; and it was not till it was up that I perceived the smell. The man tells me, that if I will keep the windows open it will soon go away. I could not think of papering the rooms all over again."

" Couldn't you ? " said Nurse. " I think you might have told me so, then ; for I couldn't think of sleeping in such a stink, nor letting baby do it either. So I'll put the bed upon the floor in this room for to-night, and to-morrow we'll see what's to be found in London."

" You must pay for a week," faltered Mrs. Levet, but so hesitatingly, that it seemed as if nothing but the direst necessity could compel her to make the demand.

A violent outburst from Nurse was the answer to this ; while the poor little children sat together in their chair, their eyes staring and looking alternately at Nurse and Mrs. Levet, forgetting tea, fatigue, and every thing else.

Mrs. Levet took all this so patiently that Angela was prepossessed in her favour, and secretly resolved within herself, at all events, to remain for the present under her roof.

Nurse stopped at last for want of breath, and a sort of sulky peace was for the moment restored.

Then Mrs. Levet busied herself so kindly with the children, that Angela was more and more pleased with her. She felt that she had found a

friend in her utmost need, and gratefully acknowledged and accepted her services and kindness.

“I am so fond of children, little darlings!” said Mrs. Levet, pressing Nurse to let her take and attend to the baby, who, scared and astonished, sat upon her lap, with its large blue eyes looking steadily at her, seeming to have forgotten that it was a baby’s proper business to roar.

It was quite true the smell of the paper rendered it impossible to sleep with the windows shut, but the night was cold and wet, and the rain beat through them when open.

The next morning the little children were all ill.

It is really a terrible evil, the way in which cheap things, not only as regards green papers, but matters of every description, are got up in this country; and the vast additions to the sin of dishonesty that are thus incurred.

This system of cheating the poor man, by selling him at an apparently low price that which is, in fact, very unfairly above its original cost and intrinsic value, is carried on in the most shameless manner, greatly to the injury of all concerned.

So long ago as the Spectator’s time, we find

remonstrances upon this subject, especially as respected the vending of unwholesome and vitiated food ; and I fear that, in the inferior shops in London, the evil has not, to this day, diminished.

There was nothing to be done but to paper the rooms over again ; which it was at last arranged should be effected at the joint cost of Angela and Mrs. Levet, without Nurse being consulted.

Mrs. Levet had given Angela to understand, without explaining herself further, that her own circumstances were in a very depressed state ; and that the furniture she once possessed was not actually sold, but at the pawnbroker's she had confessed in a hesitating voice ; but she added that she trusted to receive some money soon from her husband, who was still living, and at present upon the Continent with a gentleman.

These things arranged, their boxes were unpacked, and a few little memorials of old times which Angela had preserved put in their places ; their small library was disposed upon the pier-table ; the little children's toys in one corner—her work-basket in another ; a china cup, out of which her father used to breakfast, in the middle of the chimneypiece ; two extremely small silver candlesticks belonging to Margaret at each end ; and a pennyworth of gillyflowers in a glass upon the table. The bedrooms re-papered, the smell gone, the curtains down ; a little fire in the tiny grate.

Angela sat down to her needle, looked round, and began once more to enjoy the delicious repose of feeling herself at home.

She wanted rest. The last six weeks had been one continual hurry and worry;—rest was in itself a great enjoyment.

Nurse, who had made it up with Mrs. Levet—for these passionate people are ready enough to make it up when nothing on earth has been done to offend them, and to forget very generously and graciously all the violent and ill-natured things themselves have said,—Nurse was sitting down stairs with that good lady, enjoying what she called “a dish of chat;” the little ones were all fast asleep, and Angela watched them, the doors open, her spirits soothed by their quiet breathings, and, communing with her own thoughts, was still.

CHAPTER II.

Let not romantic views your bosom sway,
Yield to your duties, and their call obey.

CRABBE.

THE time was come.

That difficult period in such a woman's life arrived, when she must seriously set about getting her living.

A few steps below her in position, and domestic service would have afforded a certain provision for herself at least; and the children must have been supported by the public. Had she been of those who are called "the poor," she would not have been half so poor.

For young women in her class, few ways of maintaining themselves exist; and of those the remuneration is, in most cases, wretchedly small. The market is overstocked with these willing and friendless labourers.

To apprentice themselves to the milliners and dress-makers, to give lessons, or establish themselves as governesses in families, or accept the part of *dame de compagnie*, which is indeed much the same thing, almost completes the catalogue of the facilities offered to them. The recompense of the mere labour of a woman's hands as a needle-woman, even in the most skilful way, is so small, that it need not be enumerated.

In Angela's case she had already learned, in conversation with Mrs. Levet, that it would, with her utmost exertions, fall far below what would be absolutely necessary for the support of herself and these callow birds who cried to her for food. To give lessons as daily governess, was what she would have greatly preferred to all other occupations; but here, again, the necessity of making a considerable sum yearly stood in her way. It would require a number of families to fill all the hours she would have to dispose of, and less would fall far short of her necessities.

There seemed no alternative but to endeavour to procure the place of governess in a school or private family; for which, indeed, she was eminently qualified by her various accomplishments, though her extreme youth, she feared, might prove an objection. She must then leave her humble home, and entrust her little loves to the care of Nurse and of Mrs. Levet. And, oh! how she

blessed the placid temper of the latter, which would afford a rest and shelter to the poor little orphans against the heat and impatience of the old servant. Yes, she must be contented to abandon her nest, sweet and good mother-bird, and fly far away to procure nourishment for them all.

Her resolution once taken, she resolved not to allow herself the procrastination of a day. Her little funds were rapidly diminishing, in spite of Nurse's sedulous economy. Scarcely enough would be left to carry on the war until a quarter's salary would become due, even were she to find a situation immediately.

That very night, therefore, when Nurse was gone to bed, she called Mrs. Levet softly up stairs; and while all slumbered around them—while the little noisy street was still, and door shutting after door in the court behind told of the return of the wearied mechanics, Angela and Mrs. Levet sat over the dying embers of her small fire, and Angela opened her mind to her new friend, and asked whether she could assist her.

“I have lived in several families, ma'am,” said Mrs. Levet, “in my time; but it's a long time ago now, and many have, perhaps, forgotten me altogether; but I will go to Mrs. Usherwood's, where I once lived four years, and inquire if they want a governess, or know of any one that does. There is a lady,” she said, “but she's not in town, I

believe, and will not be till next spring, who would be the person to apply to, for she's very rich, and knows a many great families.—And she's very kind, and the friendless are sure to find a friend in her; at least, so I've been told; but I never saw her but once, and don't know where to write to her: besides, I've no claims. But I will put on my bonnet and walk over to Mrs. Usherwood's the first thing in the morning. She lives in one of the new squares, quite at the west end of the town; and I heard yesterday she was in London, though she does not like that people should know it at this unfashionable time of the year."

"Do you think she is likely to be in want of a governess herself?" asked Angela.

"Yes, ma'am, to be sure she is. She's always wanting something of that sort. And now I recollect, that happens to be the very business she's come up to town about, as the footman told me yesterday. She's a lady rather fond of changing her servants and governesses—that's rather an objection; but, my dear miss, you must get into the first place you can, having so poor a recommendation as mine; and then, when once it's known you have been in a *good* family, people will be ready enough to take you: for everybody wants a governess nowadays, I think."

They talked a little longer; and while Angela

was expressing her thanks for Mrs. Levet's kindness, her hostess coloured and said,—“Pray don't thank me, miss. I am very glad to be of any service. I have been longing to make you any amends in my power for your first disappointment about the lodgings; but indeed it was out of my power to do any thing more than I did. These rooms were very comfortably furnished when I first wrote to Anne about them—but, Miss Angela, you know nothing is one's own when once one is married.”

“I should think not,” said Angela in her innocence. “Who would wish to possess any thing separate from her husband?”

And her heart swelled as she thought of Carteret; and how with him there would have been but one heart, one thought, one purse, one everything.

She sighed, but she rarely indulged herself in thoughts which only served to weaken her spirits and abate her resolution.

“Why, I don't exactly know that, Miss Angela. It must depend upon who that husband may be.”

“People should be cautious in choosing their husbands,” said Angela, with a slight smile.

“Ah! yes. That is very easy to say, miss; but somehow people can't, and don't exactly *choose* their husbands. It comes upon them they don't

know how. Little did I think when I left Mrs. Darby's family, as dear Miss Augusta was grown up, and went to live at the lodge, where I had my poultry and my little garden, and all so nice and comfortable,—little did I think that Tom Levet would come round me as he did. I was a simpleton, to be sure; but then true love makes us so trusting."

A slight blush just passed over Angela's cheek.

"I never could believe that there was any thing but truth in his heart when he had such a persuading tongue; and such eyes, too!—There was more in his eyes than even in his persuading tongue, miss. But, oh, Miss Nevil, 'Men were deceivers ever,' as the old verse says."

Angela did not in the least assent to this last sentiment. Like many another fond confiding creature, she believed her lover was an exception to the rule.

"I don't think, miss," continued Mrs. Levet, "that the law *is* quite just to poor women. Mr. Barr, the attorney, laughs at me when I say this, and tells me, what has law to do with love matters? and if women will be so silly as to marry, they must take the consequences.—But I don't think it's quite so.—Love matters are great things to women, and the law should take care of those who don't know how to take care of themselves; and it strikes me as hard, because a woman goes

with a man to the altar, that all she's made, or shall make by her own pains and efforts, is to be his, whether he deserves it or not—to spend or to spare just as he sees best; and sometimes when the poor drudge comes home, maybe kill her in a drunken passion; drunken with perhaps the very money the poor thing has earned or saved, and no help for it, except to go before a magistrate and swear the peace against him. Swear the peace!—as if that ever brought peace to any house!”

“It seems hard, to be sure,” said Angela, unable as it were fully to realise the situation; “but women should look out well before they marry, you know.”

Yes, my dear, Mrs. Levet might have retorted, had she known Angela's story. And how carefully you looked a-head before you pledged your heart!

“They don't know what they are about,” persisted Mrs. Levet; “for me, I never thought of looking about me. Why should I distrust Tom? every body said Tom was the best fellow in the world; something younger than me, to be sure he was. But how he vowed and swore! and what ways he had! I thought he loved me better than all the world beside: but it was my money spoiled him.”

Angela made no answer. She did not take

much interest in the love-adventures of Tom Levet.

“And now,” said Mrs. Levet, at length reaching her conclusion, “this it is which has brought me to the state things are in now. When Tom was master of me and my money, he became quite a new creature—he left his place, for he was Mr. Darby’s head groom; and to be sure, to do him justice, he was steady enough for a week or two at first: but since that, with my few hundred pounds that were left, he thought himself quite the gentleman, and took to the turf, thinking, as he said, that he should turn many a penny by his knowledge of horses, and be quite the great man all the time.—But somehow he was not lucky; with all his faults, he was too open-hearted and off-hand was Tom among those blacklegs.—So he soon lost the most part of my poor little stock. It is only those who have *made* the money, Miss Angela, who properly know how to value it: so when I saw the money was going so fast, I took courage, and, ‘Tom, my dear,’ says I, ‘we shall soon be in the poor-house if we go on in this manner;’ and with what little there was left, before it was all gone, I bought the good-will of this poor little shop here, hoping to turn a penny honestly, and furnished the little rooms above neatly enough. But nothing has gone well with me; for Tom, poor fellow, after

a hard run of ill-luck, took to drinking French brandy. He was so miserable in his mind, poor lad, how could I refuse him any thing?—So one thing after another went to the pawnbroker's, till I *am* ashamed of the apartment you have taken, and none but my own cousin, or you, my dear, gentle young lady, would have put up with it."

"Where is your husband now?" asked Angela.

"Gone abroad, last August, with a gentleman who was in a very great haste and in distress for a servant, and Tom being at hand he got the place in a hurry.—He just ran down to give me a kiss before he was off; and he never told me either where he was going, or what was the gentleman's name.—So like Tom!" concluded Mrs. Levet with a tender smile."

The only thing that affected Angela's fate in this history of love-betrayed Mrs. Levet, was the mortification the matter of pawning the furniture had given her, and her desire to make up what she considered a wrong done to Angela in some other way. She therefore repeated her offers of service.

A little more conversation followed upon the subject of Mrs. Usherwood, and they separated with the agreement that Mrs. Levet should set out early the next morning, so as to reach Lowndes Square before Mrs. Usherwood had finished breakfast, and see what could be done.

And then Angela went to bed, and lay awake

thinking of Carteret—of his tenderness, his goodness, his love, and his melancholy forebodings of evil. She had mourned him as dead; and yet there were moments when she could not resist a sort of hope that all had not ended between them, but that, sooner or later, she should meet with him again. These vague fancies would come at intervals, like sunbeams breaking from behind the clouds upon a dark and heavy day, telling of a region where there is light.—And so to her, amid all the gloomy obscurity of the present, some faint evanescent promise of a better future, would at brief intervals seem to disclose itself—and there could be no happy future without Carteret.

This evening it had flashed across her mind, that the gentleman who had so suddenly gone abroad last August, and who had engaged the services of Thomas Levet, might by possibility be Carteret himself.

But she rejected this idea almost immediately.

Nothing could by possibility seem more irrational than to suppose that if he had been obliged to go abroad, however great the hurry, he would not have found time to write a few lines to relieve her uneasiness, and account to her for his disappearance.

No—no! it was impossible; it was absurd, romantic, ridiculous!

Yet now and then this irrational sort of hope would recur, she knew not why; till Tom Levet and Carteret became inseparably associated in her mind. She caught herself once or twice asking Mrs. Levet questions about her husband, and again and again inquiring into the particulars of his departure. But all she could learn was that Tom, in his wild way, after an absence of a few days, had run into the shop one morning, thrown his arms round her neck, kissed her, and begged her to give him all the money in the till; saying that she would be troubled with him no more yet awhile, as he was going to sail with a young gentleman that evening. (*Young!* he was, then, a *young* gentleman?) That the gentleman had taken him into his service because he was in a prodigious hurry, and had no time to lose in looking out for another, and that he was quite satisfied with hearing that he had lived with Mr. Darby, and married his old nurse, "chucking me under the chin, and looking so handsome and so droll, miss, as he said this; and he ran out as fast as he ran in, carrying away every penny I had in the house."

A young gentleman wanting a servant!

That could not be Mr. Carteret. He was too poor. Yet, perhaps, he was not actually so poor; perhaps, like many other people, he thought and

called himself poor, because there were so many richer than himself.

“And you cannot recollect where Mr. Levet said he was going to?”

“I think it was to an island called Sicily, Miss Nevil, if there is such a place; but I was in such a flutter of spirits that I really seem to have forgotten almost every thing. It was just like a flash of lightning running into the house—there and gone again, and leaving me all in a flutter behind him.”

“Perhaps your husband will write to you?”

“I have little hope or expectation of that, miss. He never wrote me but one letter in his life, and that was a love-letter when we were lovers, and he was forced to leave me to go with Mr. Darby to Newmarket. It was a very moving letter, and I have kept it by me ever since. I never got another, for Tom hates writing.”

“When do you think he will be back?”

“Nay, how can I say, Miss Nevil? Do I know how far it is to Sicily? Some say it's off the coast of Cornwall; some, that it's half-way across the world.”

At last Angela was called upon to give her attention to other matters, but this little incident had done her good; these hopes, unreasonable as they might appear, cheered her on—she allowed herself, now and then, to indulge the idea that,

some way or other, she should hear of Carteret again. And, roused to fresh cheerfulness whenever the thought occurred, she turned with added resolution to the new life before her. Come when he would, he should find her well-doing.

CHAPTER III.

Men

Their passions and their feelings ; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That mid the simpler forms of life,
Exist more simple in their elements.

MRS. LEVET, true to her promise, had gone to Lowndes Square the next morning, and had visited Mrs. Usherwood.

Angela was somewhat surprised to see the extremely neat and respectable appearance made by her landlady, as she just looked in upon her before she sallied forth.

Her dress was exceedingly handsome, and her good looks would have justified Tom Levet's preference, even though so many years younger than herself, and had not the *beaux yeux de sa cassette* been still more attractive than her own.

"I am going early, Miss Nevil, as I told you last night I would," she said, "for Mrs. Usherwood is a very active, stirring lady ; and when

she is up in town for only a few days, she's out by eleven or twelve in the morning, and not in again till between five and six in the evening; and while she's out, you know, she may hear of something that may suit her: so there's no time to be lost."

Angela was at this moment sitting at her breakfast-table with her two little children, and Nurse was standing by.

"Well, upon my word, Cousin Levet," said Nurse, "you *are* come out this morning! I am sure to see you on common days, so unlike the smart, neat, handsomely dressed Sarah Gillow of old times, makes me sick; for I can't abide a sloven, and never could; and some way, Sarah, to speak the truth—as a friend, you know, ought to do—you seem, since you married, to have become a most dreadful one."

Mrs. Levet had carefully avoided confiding to Nurse the history of her love and the source of her difficulties. The misdemeanours of her beloved Tom, she well knew, would only furnish fresh arms against herself, and enable Nurse to wound her in the most sensitive part; so she only said,—

"Why, Anne, when one lives in a narrow street in London, in all the fog and smoke, it ain't quite like living in a nice, clean, light, large house in the country, with a nursery as big as

any drawing-room; and somehow one loses the custom of being clean, seeing every body else so dirty. And besides, one can't keep clean half an hour, let one do ever so; so what's the use?"

"Can't one?" said Nurse, casting a triumphant glance upon her own wholesome, stout, and respectable cotton gown, and her snow-white linen apron. "No, not if one must wear your flimsies and flamsies that won't bear washing, with flowers in a dirty cap, as I sometimes see you wear, I'm sorry to say: but *that* gown is something like—it's like old times, Sarah."

Mrs. Levet sighed, and cast a look of intelligence at Angela, and then she said,—

"It was my wedding-gown, Miss Nevil; and I've hoarded it ever since, and nothing shall ever make me part with *it*. And now, if you please, I think I had better be setting out, for fear Mrs. Usherwood should be gone out before I get to Lowndes Square."

"What's she a-going to Lowndes Square for, Miss Angela?" asked Nurse, with no great suavity of tone. "What is now in the wind, I wonder?—I suppose I'm not to know. But I think you might as well take me into counsel as that poor blundering simpleton of a Mrs. Levet."

"I thought you were of my counsels already, dear Nurse," said Angela, whose sweet temper

was proof against the wearisome provocations of Nurse's humours. "We had agreed, you know, that I must immediately do something to maintain us all, and I am going to endeavour to get the place of governess at this Mrs. Usherwood's; for Mrs. Levet told me last night that she heard she was in want of one."

"And my master's daughter is really going out as a governess, after all!" said Nurse, lifting up her eyes. "My stars!"

"Why, Nurse, it has been the plan all along; you know we talked it over together, and agreed there was nothing else to be done."

"Ay, talked it over!" responded Nurse; "but I never thought it would come *really* to the point. And now it is coming to the point, I cannot bear the thoughts of it. Oh, it's a miserable thing to be a governess in some families! And there are affronts put upon them, poor things! that your father's daughter was never born to bear. I can't endure to think of it—that I can't."

Angela's own heart, now it really was come to the point, now she was really about to enter the abode of strangers, and, for the first time, assume a dependent situation, had its peculiar terrors and secret misgivings to contend with. As usual, she met with no support or consolation from Nurse, who, the more she felt for her, was the more out of humour.

But her patience with the tiresome old woman, her command of her own temper—still warm, young, and headstrong—under these daily irritations, and the resolution with which she held down in her own heart, almost by main force, all the irresolutions, hesitations, fears, and misgivings which were tormenting her within, was really beautiful.

It arose from her ready and cheerful acquiescence in the part assigned her. She accepted all from the hand of God, and only strove to perform her task well.

And thus she might be seen, not only vanquishing the repugnance of her own feelings, but doing every thing in her power to bring Nurse to a more reasonable temper, and, above all, to smooth matters between her and Mrs. Levet, with whom the old woman seemed determined to quarrel, as being the means by her good-natured exertions of forwarding a plan she herself so much disliked, though she was quite incapable of suggesting any other.

They had the whole day to debate the matter, as it proved, for it was past seven o'clock before Mrs. Levet got back.

She came up stairs without waiting to put off her things, and, at Angela's invitation, sat down and related what had passed.

Luckily, Nurse was engaged with the children,

so Mrs. Levet was allowed to proceed in her story without any provoking comments or interruptions.

“I hope I have got the place for you, Miss Nevil,” she began by saying; “and it’s lucky I was a little later than my time; for Mrs. Usherwood was gone out before I arrived at the door, and I had to wait till she came in, which she did not do till past six o’clock.”

“She had not engaged any one while she was out, then?” said Angela.

“Oh no, Miss Nevil; and that was the best of it. She had been disappointed of two or three she had been after, and it had vexed her a good deal, as I saw by her face—for no lady likes to have her situation refused—much less such a lady as Mrs. Usherwood, who was a great heiress herself, and whose husband is a member of parliament, and a very rich gentleman, too. So she seemed rather pleased to find somebody awaiting for her, coming to ask for it, you see.”

“And will she engage me, do you think?”

“Yes, Miss Nevil, I think she will; for I told her you were very anxious to be engaged, and would do any thing in the world to give satisfaction, and that I believed you could teach a great many things, and were a very accomplished young lady. ‘And without fine notions, I hope,’ Mrs. Usherwood said. And I assured her you

were as unused to fine notions as could be, and so good-natured and humble that any thing would content you ; and then she said how she was very glad to hear it, for she hated fine ladies and fine notions in her house above all things."

"She didn't use to dislike to have us well-dressed in the nursery neither, I recollect," added Mrs. Levet. "The two years I lived with her she used to insist upon my being very smart when I came down with Miss Baby into the drawing-room. I used to think that it was a danger of giving the maids a taste for fine clothes, which, poor things ! they're fond enough of by nature. I liked a neat print better than a silk or a white jaconot ; but Mrs. Usherwood called it vulgar, and couldn't abide it. I'm sure Miss Jemima, her maid, was dressed more like a maid of honour than any thing else, with her hair in long ringlets and her neck-lace and rings. But I suppose Mrs. Usherwood has seen the mischief of this, and don't like finery so well as she used to do. And so the upshot of this is, that she begged you'd come to her at half-past ten precisely to-morrow morning. And if you please, Miss Nevil, as you're strange in London, I will be very glad to walk with you there, and introduce you myself to Mrs. Usherwood."

Angela had a new and neat, though extremely plain and cheap, morning dress, so that she could

listen without anxiety to the report of Mrs. Usherwood's splendid maids. She thanked Mrs. Levet for her kindness, and asked how far it was to Lowndes Square.

“About a quarter of an hour's walk ; and if we go a little round, through the pleasantest part of St. James's Park. And,” added Mrs. Levet, “as you are so kind and fond of these little darlings, it will be very convenient to you to step down now and then and have a look at them. And besides, Nurse can bring 'em into the Park when you are walking with the young ladies ; and so you can see them almost every day.”

Little matters are great blessings to those but scantily provided with such articles ; this idea quite put Angela in spirits.

She was the most simple, straightforward, unsophisticated young creature that ever existed. She could not in the least understand the degradation of earning her living by making her talents useful ; so the anxious ruminations of a long and sleepless night were not embittered by false pride.

She lay awake, for she could not compose her excited thoughts to sleep ; dwelling upon the

recollections of that dear past of which she was about to take leave, and endeavouring to penetrate that new future which lay before her.

She was then, at last, actually about to do that upon which she had so often speculated as a remote possibility, but never had, in fact, quite realised until now. She was to go forth, alone and unprotected, to take her place in a family of perfect strangers, without a friend to advise or encourage her in this new scene.

She could not help feeling as if there were something very awful in it.

Her thoughts reverted—they would revert, in spite of all her efforts—to Carteret, and contrast the happy life of industrious art, yet with an independence however small, which she had hoped to share with him. The exquisite delights of that little home which she had pictured to herself, and which his presence was to bless, and the prospect now before her—when she was to leave all she loved, to sit down at another person's board, and enter, alone and unfriended, that world which had once smiled so fairly upon her.

But she interrupted the course of these thoughts.

“And am I doubting and repining?” thought she, “when I ought to be filled with gratitude for my deliverance, and the deliverance of these

littles ones, from beggary? when I have found a place, and so early, too, without the least connexion, friendless as I am?"

Then that good heart of hers began to compose itself with reflections upon the serious nature of the duties she was about to undertake—upon her youth—upon the vast responsibility before her—and, while she made the sincerest resolutions to perform her new duties to the best of her honest ability, and uttered her humble prayers for help, her agitated nerves became composed, hope and a cheerful confidence in the future succeeded; and as she closed her eyes, the picture of Carteret returned and restored to her floated like a vision before them.

She dressed herself with much care in the morning; but all her care could not disguise the extreme economy, not to say parsimony, which had presided over her wardrobe.

Generously indifferent to things which merely related to herself—after indulging a little in dressing her infant charges more according to their former condition than the one they now occupied—she had spent scarcely any thing upon her own clothes. Her plain black stuff dress, her small black collar, her plain shawl, and black straw bonnet, were certainly not at all in harmony with what had once been Mrs. Usherwood's expectations upon the all-important sub-

ject of dress; but, in spite of Mrs. Levet's description of this part of that lady's character, Angela felt no uneasiness about the matter, for, as she glanced at herself in her little glass before she set out, she could not deny that she looked very neat—how elegant, beautiful, and interesting, in the midst of her extreme simplicity of attire, she was not in the least aware.

Mrs. Levet, however, whose eye had been accustomed to elegance, and to detect what she called the real lady in any garb, looked at her *protégée* with much satisfaction, and declared her confident belief that Mrs. Usherwood would be quite delighted with her.

"I should think she would," said Nurse. "I don't know who your Mrs. Usher-Kusher may be, or come from—I never heard such a name in *my* days—she may be glad enough to get such a real gentlewoman as Miss Nevil to be her slave, be she who she may."

CHAPTER IV.

O Fool ! to think God hates the worthy mind,
The lover and the love of human kind,
Where life is healthful and his conscience clear ;
Because he wants a thousand pounds a year !

LOWNDES SQUARE, as every body upon earth knows, is a square composed of very fine houses ; one of the finest of the squares, in the finest and most *comme il faut* part of this metropolis of ours. Regulated as, I suppose, all other metropolises are, and ever will be, upon the most whimsical rules of preference with respect to some portions of the earth, in contrast to others — a preference which has planted the present great world in the midst of what was some ten years ago a marshy, unwholesome flat, but which is now a city of imperial palaces.

Palaces, where every thing is assembled that wealth and luxury, and our passion for the beautiful, and our uncontrolled love of display,

and our dread of being behind our neighbours in these things, can combine to render life a scene of magnificence—whether of enjoyment or not, is as the case may prove to be.

Surely never, in the fabulous eastern cities of old, could there have been such an accumulation of boundless wealth in the hands of countless multitudes as in this vast beehive of ours. What lines and lines of streets!—what squares and crescents, filled with large handsome houses!—what oceans of crimson curtains and flowered carpets!—what gilded mirrors and enamelled consoles!—what wealth scattered upon all sides! It is certainly a very wonderful thing.

And then, to think into what hands this abundance often falls, and how it is used and misused by the myriads who have thus started into wealth as it were by magic!—The favourites of fortune and happy speculation, too often incapable of comprehending the duties, or appreciating the rich blessings of the situation into which they have been suddenly elevated.

Their wealth is too often a source of arrogance rather than of honest enjoyment, and used as an offensive weapon, to depress and mortify the less fortunate, rather than as the means of making themselves and others happy.

Some of these *nouveaux riches* are gentle and inoffensive, overloaded with finery, and living

in a fatiguing sort of full-dress life all day. Others are insolent and overbearing; others, luxurious and self-indulgent; a few vicious; many, by their talents, intellect, and virtues, shining forth as stars in the firmament.

Angela and Mrs. Levet stopped at a very grand house in the centre of the square, the property of Rupert Usherwood, Esq., M.P. for the city of * * *

Mrs. Levet knocked at the door.

The three or four tall footmen that usually presented themselves upon such occasions, and the magnificent butler, almost too terrible for ordinary mortals to address, did not present themselves; nobody appeared but a small and not very clean page in an undress, who, after surveying Angela from head to foot, asked her business, and then conducted her up stairs into a large back drawing-room, where Mrs. Usherwood was sitting at a table, with her writing-desk open before her, and numerous letters and papers lying scattered in confusion around it.

“Miss Nevil and Mrs. Levet.”

“Oh, Levet! is it you?” cried the lady of the house, just glancing up from a letter which she was perusing. “Sit down—I’ll be with you in half a minute.”

While Mrs. Usherwood continued engaged with the letter which she held in her hand, Mrs.

Levet had signed to Angela to sit down; she did so, and then had leisure to consider a scene to her inexperience perfectly new.

The room was large and lofty, as all such rooms now are, and terminated by a splendid window composed of immense panes of glass, which would have displayed to the utmost advantage the high bare walls of the houses behind, had they not been masked by an elegant conservatory, now, however, completely denuded of flowers; a few pots of withered mignonette, and half-a-dozen straggling, half-dead geraniums, being all that remained of the splendid display which, in the season, made a summer-palace of the place.

The walls of the room were gilt in panels, and covered with gilded ornaments and painted representations of flowers and figures in the old French taste, the principal medallions being occupied with choice water-colour drawings by some of the first masters of the day; but the whole was covered, from the ceiling to the floor, with muslin, as was the ceiling itself; the frames of the immense mirrors which adorned the chimney-piece and the centre of the opposite wall were likewise carefully wrapped in yellow gauze; the chairs were in their brown-holland coats; the carpet was rolled up on one side of the floor; and the tables were all packed up, except the

one at which Mrs. Usherwood sat writing, with her feet upon a piece of green baize, which was spread just before her to serve for a carpet.

Mrs. Usherwood was a fine, handsome woman, of an unknown age — her large and more than well-developed figure, her strong, robust arm, and stout shoulders, testifying to a middle age considerably advanced ; but her face was so rosy and blooming, and still so very handsome, that it gave the lie to this, and left it impossible to decide upon the fact. She had large, clear, grey eyes, that must once have been mischievously beautiful ; her abundant dark hair was braided about her face, and a small *negligé* sort of cap at the back of her head. Her whole appearance bespoke almost jolly good health, while the most perfect confidence and self-complacency were depicted in every feature, as there she sat, one well-formed arm resting upon the table, reading and considering her letter.

Once or twice she lifted up her eyes, and cast them, in an absent, negligent sort of manner, upon the two silent figures which sat there awaiting her pleasure ; then she resumed her reading with a business-like air of attention. At last, after about a quarter of an hour had elapsed, she laid the paper down, and, turning round, presented her full, blooming, front face to Angela, who, half frightened and

half amused, regarded this very pompous and rather terrible-looking lady with an air of as serious attention as she could command.

“This is the young lady, Levet, I suppose, that you spoke to me about yesterday? Now, Levet, I would have you, as a preliminary, at once to understand, that I am the very last person in the world to engage with any one without the very best and most unexceptionable recommendations; and I hope you have made this young lady well aware . . . Your name, if you please?”

“Nevil—Angela Nevil.”

“A very romantic, trashy, novel sort of name, I must say! Is it your real name, young woman, pray? It’s no use attempting to impose fine outsides upon me. I dare say your real name is Jenny or Mary Bond, or something of that sort. But don’t be hurt or frightened, my dear: I look upon these things as very innocent sort of little deceptions; for though, of course, *I* should choose to be acquainted with your real name myself, yet I don’t know that I object altogether to the adoption of one—the name of Nevil, for instance—it sounds aristocratic; and I wish it to be universally known that I suffer none but perfect gentlewomen about my daughters: but as to the name of Angela, I positively”—with a little half-insolent, half-patronising laugh—“must put my veto upon that!”

“It is, unfortunately, my real Christian name,” said Angela, quietly and drily, “and I have no other. My father was Captain Nevil, of the 64th.”

“Really!”—looking at Mrs. Levet. “Levet, you are the voucher for this young lady.”

The colour flew into Angela’s face. She found it necessary to summon all the strength of mind she could muster, to repress her indignation and avoid any actual demonstration of it. She was silent till the victory over herself was gained, and then she spoke again:—

“If my own assurance is not sufficient, I have only one reference to give—Mrs. Whitwell, of the Great Ash Farm, near Stollingford. There—or stay,” said she, recollecting herself, “Messrs. A. and B., my father’s agents, would perhaps be better.”

“I have the pleasure of a slight acquaintance with Mr. A.’s family,” said the stately lady: “that reference will be sufficient. There’s no further uneasiness upon that head, my dear. Your father was Captain Nevil, of the 64th, you say? We will conclude it so, and proceed to further inquiries. Hem—have you ever been out before, pray? and what is your reason for coming out now?”

“She’s a vast deal too handsome for me!” soliloquised Mrs. Usherwood within herself. “I think I never saw such a figure before; and

her eyes are just what mine used to be at her age!"

"Eh!" eyeing her through her glass, "what does she say, Levet? She speaks so low. What were you saying, Miss Nevil? I ask you whether you were ever out before?"

"No, madam—this is the first time."

"Never out before!—that's a most serious objection. But perhaps you have been teacher at a school, or something of that sort? I beg your pardon—an officer's daughter, to be sure! But then many officers are so miserably poor. I am sure I often say so to Mr. Usherwood, and wish he'd see and do something about it. Well, my dear, don't be downhearted. Never out before! Very well, that's settled."

And the lady turned round and made a note in her tablets.

"Pray may I ask what age you are?" again fixing her eyes upon her, and looking, as Angela thought, very formidable, and yet with something in her air and attitude so like a fine lady (as "Punch" might have represented her), she could hardly repress a smile.

"I am nineteen—I shall be twenty next May, madam."

"Nineteen! And I wonder what salary you may expect?"

“As much as you can possibly afford to give me, for I am very, very poor,” said Angela.

“A very odd reason for expecting a high salary, I must say, my dear, because you will easily comprehend the *rationale* of the thing. When a lady with a small independence or so, and accustomed to the higher circles and the elegancies of life, demands a high salary—and really some of the creatures are dreadfully unreasonable—we, we really,” laughing affectedly, “are obliged, you know, to submit to it; though it can never be looked upon as any thing but a specious imposition thus to tax the necessities of parents. But when a young lady confesses to being very young and very poor, we expect rather—Miss Nevil, pray excuse me—to make a bargain. Youth, you know, is a most serious objection—though one,” with another slight laugh, “that will abate with time; but poverty, my dear, as it has usually interfered with the acquisition of the necessary accomplishments, besides being in itself a sort of thing with which one does not like to have to do,—why, Miss Nevil, to speak frankly and plainly, which is the best way between people of sense, I should hope to find you reasonable.”

“If you will be pleased, madam, to name the salary you are accustomed to give, I shall be able,

I dare say, to conform to your wishes. I am quite ignorant at what rate my services should be estimated ; I want experience in such things."

"Why, let me see:—I give my lady's-maid thirty pounds a-year ; but then she's such a dear, clever creature ;—and my housekeeper, fifty. Suppose we were to split the difference, and put you between ; which I really should not think of doing only there is something in your appearance that pleases me—suppose we say forty?"

Angela started, and turned pale.

Forty!—for them all ;—it would not pay for the miserable roof that sheltered them.

And yet, should she refuse it, what must they do ?

"I am sorry, madam," she began, hesitating, but rising from her chair as she spoke ; "but I am afraid that sum would not enable me to fulfil the objects which I proposed to myself in seeking a situation of this kind. I have two little brothers and a sister entirely dependent upon me for support."

Mrs. Usherwood looked aghast in her turn at this intelligence ; but she recovered herself, and, looking steadily at Angela, said, in a tone of marked disapprobation,—

"It is extremely disagreeable to me to have any one in my household with encumbrances." Then, after a little reflection, looking a good deal

vexed and disconcerted, she went on : — “ It’s very odd to me how a young woman, so *very* young as you are, should have been so foolish as to burthen yourself in this troublesome manner. Surely there must be some uncle, or aunt, or cousin, or something, to take charge of the children ? You said your father, Captain Nevil, was dead. Is your mother dead, too ? ”

“ Yes, madam ; she died a few days after I was born.”

“ I don’t understand you ; I thought you said ‘ brothers and sister.’ ”

“ My father married again, madam ; and my second mother is dead also.”

“ And left these children a burthen upon you ! Now really, my dear Miss Nevil, I am but a recent friend, — but you must suffer me to tell you, that I never heard any thing in my life like that. A stepmother, too ! If they had been your own brothers and sister, something might have been said for you — but a stepmother ! it’s really too bad. I must speak out — I never heard such a scandalous thing in my life ! Depend upon it, my dear, you have been dreadfully imposed upon, and the best thing you can do is to get rid of these little creatures at once. Pluck up a proper spirit, and throw them back upon their relations, I advise you, and come to me ; that will furnish an excellent excuse ; for — I repeat it — I

never heard of such a scandalous imposition upon a young creature in my life. This will, as I have said, be your excuse ; nay, lay you under a necessity to shake the burthen off: for, depend upon it, I never will take a governess with such an encumbrance into my family."

"Then, madam, there is nothing more to be said," was Angela's reply, rising again and courtesying, as if about to depart.

"Stay — stay, my dear ; don't be in such a hurry ; — pray, sit down again," said Mrs. Usherwood, who, though well inclined to drive a hard bargain, had not the slightest intention of letting Angela go. In the first place, she had been disappointed the day before by three governesses, to whom her situation had been offered, and who had declined it ; and she felt piqued and impatient to fill the place immediately. Then the idea of having the daughter of a Captain Nevil of the 64th as her dependant, flattered her vanity very much ; added to which, she felt quite sure that she should manage to engage the services of one evidently so necessitous and so friendless at a very cheap rate ; and though forty pounds would not be enough, there might be ways and means found of concluding a very advantageous bargain.

"Pray sit down again, Miss Nevil. I am your real friend, I hope you believe. I only said what

I did with the hope of serving you, and of persuading you to liberate yourself from a burthen most ungenerously cast upon your youth and incaution by others, and of furnishing you with the best pretence for so doing."

"There are no others, madam," she replied, gravely; "these poor children have not, that I know of, a relation in the world to take charge of them but myself."

"Very shocking, indeed! Well, well," — with a condescending cordiality, and a half patronising, half caressing manner, which was almost too intolerable to be borne,—"if that's the case, and you come to me, we must see what can be done for them. There's Christ's Hospital and the Greycoat School, both of which Mr. Usherwood subscribes to; and though he's very chary of who he recommends, yet, in a case like this As for your little sister How old, pray, is *she*?"

"Six years old, madam."

"Why, we'll make a little governess of *her*, perhaps, some of these days. So you see, my love, as the old proverb says, 'you may go further and fare worse;' and you had better make up your mind to my forty pounds. I assure you, my dear, without flattery, I am so much pleased with your appearance — a certain gentility that there is about you—that I wouldn't scruple to exceed a

little for your sake ; but I assure you, with our large family, it is necessary to practise the strictest economy, and I make a point of conscience of denying myself in those acts of generosity which are the greatest of earthly indulgences to a good heart. But still, let me see," with a considering air, — " Levet, I think you spoke of Miss Nevil's accomplishments ; only one instrument, I believe : but you said the pianoforte — didn't she ? Miss Nevil, are you a proficient ?"

" I scarcely can tell whether I am or not," said Angela ; " I have heard so little music in my life."

" Would you indulge me with giving me a little specimen of your powers ? The key of the instrument is on the front drawing-room chimneypiece, I believe, if you would have the goodness to fetch it. I fear the instrument is horridly out of tune."

So it was ; but Angela had wit to discover what style of music was best likely to give satisfaction. She sat down — played off by memory a most dashing piece, and made a furious clatter.

She was rewarded for her exertions by a very gracious acknowledgment from the lady, who actually condescended to rise from her chair, and going up to Angela, and laying her hand upon her shoulder, to confess that she had quite a genius for music.

“That will do, thank you, Miss Nevil,” said she, returning to her seat and sitting down again. She seemed to be calculating a little.

The present music-master who attended her younger children, cost her between fifty and eighty guineas a-year; she considered, that if she added twenty to Angela’s salary, upon conditions of her own, she should do very well for herself, and secure the young lady’s services; so, after a pause, she said:—

“I dare say you could teach music?”

“I suppose so,” said Angela; “my mother had learned from the best professors in Italy, and she taught me.”

“Your mother? you mean your stepmother, my dear, I suppose.”

“Yes, madam.”

“Well now, I expect my governesses to be down in the schoolroom at half-past six every morning; there is nothing, in my opinion, like a habit of early rising: but suppose we say six, that would give half-an-hour—an hour taken out of the time for luncheon in the middle of the day, and another half-hour between eight and nine at night; two hours’ music-lesson divided among the six little girls would give three lessons a-week: if you choose to undertake that, I would offer twenty pounds more, nearly one-third addition to your salary.”

“It would not be enough, madam,” said Angela, steadily.

“Then, in the name of goodness,” cried Mrs. Usherwood impatiently, “do tell me what would be enough, and let me see what I can say to it!”

“I cannot do with less than eighty,” said Angela, conquering with very great effort those feelings of shyness and shame which torment delicate minds upon occasions of this sort. “I had hoped for an hundred, but I cannot do with less than eighty; we might as well perish at once as attempt it.”

“Well really, my dear,” said Mrs. Usherwood, with another self-complacent little laugh, “you are as clever at making a bargain as any of your sisters of the ferule that ever I met with! You rate your accomplishments a little too high, I am afraid. But I think Levet said—didn’t you, Levet?—that Miss Nevil knew something of drawing. Have you brought any specimens of your performance in that way with you?”

“No, madam; but I can draw in water-colours a little.”

“Well, a little may do for such young children—say twenty pounds more, and you teach drawing. And now I hope you will not impose further upon my facility, for I never felt myself in such a give-way humour as I am this morning.”

Another fifty pounds saved upon the drawing-master!

Mrs. Usherwood was really, as she insinuated, so pleased with herself and her management as to be in high good humour. Angela really wondered at her own courage, but we know what a brave girl she was. A true, brave spirit she had, which insolence could not render humble nor indulgence insolent. There was that in her which nothing but the sufferings and mortifications of others could bend down—she could defy her own.

“One thing more, madam, there is, which is an indispensable condition of my engaging in any situation: I must be allowed, while in town, to visit my little brothers and sister at least once every week.”

“My dear creature,” said Mrs. Usherwood laughing, “do tell me, is this all, or how many more last words and last conditions are to be imposed before our treaty is signed and sealed?”

“I believe this is all.”

“Well, well, I will make no opposition about this, then; but, bless me!” looking at her watch, “the carriage must have been waiting this hour. I cannot give you one minute more: but Levet, you can walk up with Miss Nevil to-morrow. She can come and breakfast with me, and then we will arrange every thing, and I will explain to her my plans for the education of my children,

and what I expect from their *institutrices*—for I do hate that vulgar word governess. ‘My governess’ here, and ‘My governess’ there: so like an old-fashioned school-girl. Good morning, Miss Nevil; good morning, Levet. By the by, where are you living now?”

“In —— Street, Westminster.”

“And where in the world is that? Never heard of such a place before!”

“It’s at the back of the Abbey, madam.”

“Ah, the Abbey! Noble piece of architecture, is it not, Miss Nevil? Quite a treat to see the towers against the sky in a moonlight night, as one comes up from Palace Yard — I have quite a fanaticism for the sublime and the beautiful. Farewell, my dear — nine o’clock punctually, breakfast. I am the most punctual creature in the world. Farewell *au revoir!*”

And, very well pleased with her morning’s work, Mrs. Usherwood entered her carriage.

CHAPTER V.

Pains, reading, study, are their just pretence,
And all they want is spirit, taste, and sense.

POPE.

“AND now, my dear Miss Nevil, to give you a slight idea of my views of life and education.”

She sat, the picture of robust health, at the head of her well-furnished breakfast-table, eating of a game-pie *aux truffes*—her portly frame erect and vigorous, her cheeks ruddy and blooming, her large grey eyes bright, clear, and hard as diamonds; and opposite to her sat the slender and beautiful young creature, healthy and vigorous too, but whose slight frame seemed ill calculated to endure heavy fatigue, and whose delicate cheek, upon which the lovely roses of nineteen had already a little faded, and eyes anxious and sorrowful, ill suited to her years, told

of one engaged too young in the troublesome strife for existence.

“Exertion,” my dear Miss Nevil, “as some Grecian orator—I forget his name, but I dare say you know it; I learned it in Pinnock’s ‘Questions: an excellent school-book by the by—doubtless you know it well. Where was I? Yes. ‘What is the first thing for an orator?’ was the question asked; he answered, ‘Boldness:’ the second? ‘Boldness:’ the third? ‘Boldness;’ and so on. I say, What is the first thing in an instructress? Exertion: the second? Exertion; the third? Exertion. I am never idle myself, and I allow no one to be idle about me. I detest idleness.”

She stopped for want of breath, supported nature with a little more game-pie and a cup of hot coffee, and then, after a pause, went on.

“I often regret the hours that were wasted in the course of my own education. Certainly governesses were very different things then to what they are now. I was allowed to run about and play with my brothers for hours and hours in the garden, while my progress in essentials was dreadfully neglected. No wonder that I can neither speak Italian nor German, or that my progress in music, in spite of Nature having gifted me with a wonderful ear, is so inconsiderable, that to play a valse or a polka is the extent of my ability; but certainly, as I said, things are

carried on in a very different manner now. I expect not one minute to be wasted; 'always be doing something,' is *my* maxim. And certainly my elder daughters have turned out most highly accomplished, and my younger ones seem following hard upon their steps. There is a great gap between the two families: my youngest elder is eighteen, just introduced; my eldest younger, as I call her, only thirteen. Now when they are once out, of course all this sort of thing is at an end; but, till they *are* out, and while in the governess's hands, I expect the most unremitting attention to business."

"I hope I shall be able to give you satisfaction, madam," said Angela. "I have not been accustomed to idleness myself, and I do not love it."

"That's just what I like. Love it!—I can't endure it! And now, Miss Nevil, one other thing,—I do hope you are always well."

"As much as I possibly can be," said Angela, smiling; "and, indeed, I scarcely ever know what it is not to be well."

"That's charming—for its the very reason I have parted with, I might really say, scores of governesses. Someway they were never *well*—always some excuse or another; headaches—heartaches—over-fatigue—dyspepsia—exhaustion—I know not what. Now, it's a principle with

me, Miss Nevil, never to listen to people being not well—there's no end of it. Because people are not so robust-looking as I am, they fancy they cannot be half so strong,—but that's all a mistake. I really am much more delicate than I look, but *I* never complain of my health; and, therefore, I think I may be excused for not allowing any one else in my house to do so. The children often look pale and peaking, they say, but I listen to no complaints; and their elder sisters are such fine, blooming girls, that I doubt not they will all grow up so too. My last governess but two conformed to my views, and was excessively strict with regard to her lessons; unluckily, she left me to be married,—she was quite a treasure. As for the last poor thing, I did not keep her six months. She had not been with me three before her headaches, as she was always complaining, begun. Well, my dear Miss Nevil, you have two examples before you, and I hope you will be pleased not to imitate the young lady with the headaches. Won't you take a little more toast?"

"No, thank you, madam, I have breakfasted," said Angela, who began to find her horror and dislike of Mrs. Usherwood increasing every moment to a very inconvenient degree; but she comforted herself with thinking that she should, probably, when once launched, see but very little

of her ; and she already began to feel an interest in these six little girls, whom she painted to herself looking very pale, spiritless, and overworked.

“ With respect to the *plan* of study,” continued Mrs. Usherwood, with an air of decision, “ I have my own principles, also. I very much approve of the system of questions, as I before hinted. It is an immense saving of time using Pinnock’s ‘ Questions ’—or stay, somebody else,—I forget who. Never mind.—It’s astonishing what a vast deal about dates, and names of people, and places, and things, children get in that way, without the great expense of time usually consumed by reading. This leaves hours and hours of the greatest value at liberty for the languages, music, dancing, drawing, &c. I think a great deal of the languages. I know many young ladies who can speak five and read seven ; and it is the height of my ambition that my daughters should do the same. My elder girls speak French, Spanish, Italian, modern Greek, every thing, in short, except German, which we have been unfortunate in—but they are highly accomplished in every other respect. Of course I provide masters for all these things ; and the children have a French *bonne*—a Spanish little girl to play with them now and then—and an Italian and German master. So there is a vast deal to be done, you see, my dear Miss Nevil ;

and you will set a good example, I trust, of labouring from morning to night."

Angela smothered a sigh.

So young as she was!—still almost as playful as a child herself—what a prospect lay before her!—unremitting toil! We know with what spirit, and almost with what pleasure, she had anticipated the idea of providing for her little brothers and sister by her own cheerful industry. But that was as an artist, independent of the whims and caprices of others, and devoted to an art she loved to idolatry, Now, what a life of slavery was presented to her!

Ah! little do those who have *not* their livings to get appreciate the hardships those undergo who have, or feel for the numbers of young creatures—delicate, sensitive, and refined as themselves—whom the ups and downs of this busy, speculating world of ours, consign to dependance and toil.

The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,—
The oppressors' wrong, the proud man's contumely,—
And all the spurns that patient merit of
The unworthy takes.

It is a thing sorely to be lamented, in a period so peculiarly exposed to the chances and changes of fortune as that in which we live, that some greater variety of occupation is not open to young

women — that there is nothing but the eternally repeated one of the domestic governess—and that the part of domestic governess is often rendered so laborious and irksome by the carelessness and want of feeling of the employer. But while I say this, I must and will say, whether I am misunderstood or not, that, in a very great many instances, governesses make their own difficulties by their fretful discontent at the necessary conditions of their position; and that a great many, by the artful use they make of the power they possess when thus introduced into the innermost recess of the domestic temple—miserable traitors to their sacred trust!—are the means of sowing division and jealousy, and of alienating the nearest and the dearest, in order to ensure their own power and importance.

The hideous tragedy of Paris—the abominable story of Madame de Genlis's career—are with milder features, but nevertheless, as far as our manners can bear, being at this very moment carried out in numbers and numbers of families.

If the mother be to be reminded—and she cannot be too often or too strenuously reminded of her duties to the governess—let the duties of the governess towards the wife and the mother be seriously and earnestly recalled to her recollection also; and let the world terrify by its

execrations the domestic treason which has too often been the return for the kindest consideration and indulgence.

The very governess of whom Mrs. Usherwood boasted was an instance of this. Short-sighted, silly, and conceited, the mother was easily blinded, —but mothers more tender and discerning have been also blinded, till they have discovered with horror what was going on, though not, perhaps, till too late.

This governess, anxious to make herself a party in the house by means of the young ladies themselves—for the father, too often the medium of these base treacheries, happened not to be assailable—had insensibly managed to detach them from their mother, and, by the most unworthy means, centre their affections upon herself. Mrs. Usherwood's character, so full of all kinds of faults, offered, it is true, but too favourable an opportunity for the indulgence of these evil designs; for her infirmities of temper, her vanity, her conceit, afforded a wide mark for the sly shafts of the governess's satire: while the indulgence in secret of their indolence and their idle love of gossiping, and worse, far worse, their precocious fondness for love-making and flirting, had for the time quite engrossed all the affection their hearts had to bestow.

Mademoiselle was all this time carrying on an underplot of her own, in the guise of friendship, with a man possessed of some money, whose wife was expected to die of a decline; but the poor woman's tantalising tenacity of existence rendered this interesting correspondence quite a long romance. And into this romance these young girls were initiated, taking a very active interest in it, till the time arrived when they were turned out of the schoolroom into the great world to enact romances for themselves.

Fine dashing girls they proved, and as utterly devoid of truth, principle, modesty, or delicacy, as girls thus brought up, and endowed by nature with very good looks, very high spirits, and an almost total want of refined feelings, were likely to become.

Mademoiselle terminated her story, luckily for herself, just as they began theirs, and was now in the enjoyment of a plentiful fortune, and reaped the reward of the many agreeable flatteries with which she had endeavoured to compensate to the unfortunate husband the disagreeableness of having a sick, languishing wife, and for the many sad and tedious hours of suffering, unconsolated by kindness, which this defection had occasioned to the poor creature forgotten. She rode in her own carriage, presided at the head of

a plentiful table, and failed not to shuffle her husband's children by a former marriage as much out of the way as she could.

The world teems with examples of the apparently triumphant success of baseness and hard-heartedness. The wise will be prepared at once to find such results.

“Honesty is the best policy.” Yes, most true upon the long run—but it is often a very, very long run; and those who are not honest from higher motives, and cannot in those motives reap their reward, will often find their patience expended before they come to the end of it.

But in the instance to which I again turn from my digression, there is quite another aspect of the governess-life presented, and that the most interesting in the world. Here was a fine young creature, whose gentle nurture had fitted her for happier things, full of a generous bravery of spirit, devoted to the love of others, and emulous to perform her duty in every respect,—a girl endowed with all the ardour and energy of her early years, yet subdued by suffering, her temper softened and disciplined, and her whole character based upon deep religious principles.

Here was one pure-minded, high-hearted, and good; energetic, industrious, and accustomed to labour; and, in combination with all this, possessing those charms of accomplishment and

manner which the leisure of a gentlewoman's life seems necessary to give.

Here was a treasure to any mother, indeed.

And yet, miserable and provoking fate! this jewel beyond price had fallen into the hands of a coarse, ignorant, conceited woman, who understood its value about as well as the cock that of the pearl. And because there was no other way open by which to provide bread for these children, was Angela obliged to accept thankfully the hard conditions offered to her.

The case, I fear, is but too common; but where is the remedy to be found? Except, indeed, in that slow but gradual improvement of all parties—that culture of the higher features of the moral being which the rapid rush into wealth and consequent power, now common among us, seems to render so indispensable?

A real lady! a real gentleman! as the vulgar say—and what a world of meaning do they attach to the phrase! Is that beautiful model in danger of being lost?

Perhaps more so than we are quite aware.

Mrs. Usherwood told Angela that, for various reasons which she did not think it necessary to explain, the family were going to leave Brighton

almost immediately, and would shortly arrive at Mr. Usherwood's villa near Roehampton, where they would reside for about six weeks, and then, before the winter set in, would adjourn to Lowndes Square.

It was not, therefore, necessary for Angela to join the party at Brighton, and thus the expense of the journey would be spared; but as soon as they arrived at Roehampton a carriage should be despatched for her, and she should be introduced to and undertake her charge.

“And as for the children you spoke to me of; what have you done about them, after all?” she asked.

“I have made no alteration from my first plan for them; indeed, it was not in my power. There is an old and trusty servant of my father's in whose charge I shall leave them; but I hope, as we shall be only a short distance from town, that you will be so kind as to let me visit them when I can be spared?”

“It is a most tiresome circumstance, and I cannot believe but that, if you had exerted yourself properly, something might have been done,” said the lady, who was one of those who never can believe that every thing could not be arranged in this world as they would have it if it were not peoples' own fault. “I really do wish, Miss Nevil, you would shew a little more energy

upon this matter ; it really is so very disagreeable."

" I thought I had fully explained how vain it was to expect any thing should be done for those poor little things except through my own exertions ; and that my determination was to starve with them rather than desert them."

And when she got home, a pretty thing it was to see Angela sitting upon Nurse's low chair, the baby on one arm, and the other pressed round the two little ones, whom she held at once in her embrace.

All Mrs. Usherwood's hard-hearted representations served only to make these poor helpless beings dearer to her, and to bind more closely those ties which that provident lady was so anxious to sever.

" Dear Angy, so glad you're come back again. Don't go out so long ; it's so nasty when you are away," murmured the little ones, kissing and fondling her.

" Well but, Tommy, see what a pretty horse and man I've bought for you ; and it will run after you upon the floor, if you will pull this string. And look, Lucy, here's a doll for you ; we must make its clothes, and it shall dress and undress, and you will put it to bed of a night, and take great care of it. And then, dears, there's such a pretty park not far off, and you

shall go and walk in it. Nurse will take you—won't you, Nurse?"

Nurse stood looking at the group in silence.

The old woman's best feelings were excited, and something very like a tear hung upon her scanty grey eyelash.

"Ah, Miss Angela," at last she broke forth, "it's very pretty of you,—it is, indeed! but, do what you will, the light in this house will be darkened altogether when you go out of it. I am sure I don't know what will become of these poor lambs when they have lost you. And to go to be a governess, too!" her old irritable and unreasonable feelings getting the better again. "You to go and take care of another person's children, and leave my poor master's babes to run wild any how! For what *can* such a cross old woman as I am do in bringing 'em up properly, poor little ones? Bless 'em!"

"My darlings!" pressing them all three to her bosom, and kissing them.

"But then, Nurse, consider, there will be bread enough secured for them; and won't that be a good thing?"

"It will choke me for one, I'm much afeard, when I think how it has been earned by my master's daughter," persisted Nurse.

"Oh, Nurse, don't talk such nonsense!" rising from her chair, going up to the old woman, and

patting her cheek kindly. "I am sure you ought all to find it as sweet to eat as I shall find it sweet to earn."

"Baby, pretty babs," kissing and caressing the smiling infant. "Babs, my own babs, won't be so particular as foolish old Nurse, will it?"

Thus she cheered her own spirits, and tried to cheer theirs. Away from horrid Mrs. Usherwood, she soon forgot her disagreeable anticipations, and thought only of her eighty pounds.

The value of this was to be increased by its affording her the power to economise a little in the rent of her lodgings.

An income secured, she could venture to engage them by the year, instead of by the week, which would save between fifteen and twenty pounds. That would leave something less than a guinea a-week to subsist them all; and for her own clothes and cases of emergency, there was the interest of her little property in the funds.

So she felt relieved and happy. She was sure she should now get on some way very well, and, with a cheerfulness to which she had long been a stranger, she kept walking up and down the room, playing with and caressing baby.

Pretty young mother-bird! I wish you could have seen her.

As she lifted up the child to catch the sun-lights that were playing upon the wall, a ray

gleamed upon the ring which was upon her finger. Her countenance suddenly fell, for she thought of Carteret.

A sadness—one of those sudden returns of the heart when the recollection of the departed unexpectedly recurs—came over her. She hastily gave the child to Nurse, and turned away to the window.

There she stood, her eyes fixed upon that ring, musing upon the events of that evening when he had placed it upon her finger, and upon his unaccountable disappearance.

I have told you that a strange and, as she called it to herself, most irrational idea, had lately possessed her, which had connected Carteret in her mind with the gentleman gone to the Continent who had taken Tom Levet into his service. It did not amount to hope or expectation, but it was suffered to excite a sort of undefinable interest upon the subject of Mr. Levet's adventures.

She was standing in this manner at the window, lost, as it would seem, in thought, when the door of the room was hastily opened, and Mrs. Levet, her face beaming with pleasure, entered, without even waiting to ask leave.

“Oh! I do beg your pardon, Miss Nevil; I ought to have knocked, I'm sure. I hope I'm not

intruding. And how well you *are* looking!" cried Mrs. Levet, who was looking wonderfully well herself; ten years younger and ten degrees handsomer than when they separated an hour before,—so great are the effects of unexpected gladness. "But I made bold to come up, because you see, Miss Nevil, I've been very unjust to Tom. I said I was sure he'd never write to me, and here (would you believe it?) the dear fellow has sent me a letter this long!"

Angela shook off her abstraction in an instant, and, sympathising in poor Mrs. Levet's happiness, she went up to her with a smile of pleasure and a look of interest, in which some little personal curiosity might have been detected.

"Indeed," she said, "Mrs. Levet, I am very glad he has written to you; it makes you so happy. I hope he's quite well."

"Oh, dear, Miss Nevil, he seems so well and so happy, poor fellow! and he writes so prettily about past times to me. Perhaps, ma'am, you'll excuse that there's rather more love in the letter than may be quite agreeable to any but me; but it's very, very pretty of Tom, I must say."

There was a good deal of love in it, to be sure; but it was simply and truthfully expressed, and seemed to flow warm from the heart of Mr. Tom, to which it did much credit. The writer entered

into a detail of present circumstances, and enlarged much upon his good fortune in getting such an excellent master as he had lighted upon.

“Just,” to use the words of the letter, “as I was about to be ruined, body and soul, by that detestable French brandy—poor wife! when I think of the numbers and numbers of times I’ve come home, quarrelling with every body, and you worst of all, as a brute beast, and what a sot I made of myself, and how the vile habit was a-growing and a-growing upon me, faster and faster, worser and worser, every day—I can’t tell you how thankful I feel for the good luck that first threw me into Mr. ——”

“Oh, how intolerably provoking! Just come here; the great, clumsy, red seal has entirely obliterated the name!”

“What was the initial letter?”

“A V; I do believe it’s a V.”

“And then comes a U—I’m almost sure it’s a U,” said Mrs. Levet.

But Angela examined the letter with still closer attention, and she felt certain, but she said nothing about it, that, though it was impossible to decipher the initial letter, the next visible was no U, but an A.”

“Such a nice, careless sort of a master he is in some things, and I’ve half my time to myself;

but a tight one as ever you saw in others," went on the letter: "and all the better that last for your poor scapegrace of a Tom—isn't it? He told me from the first there was a doubt of my sobriety, so he gave me fair warning, if I once transgressed, we should part immediately wherever we were. He said he didn't wish to be severe, but he never tolerated a drunkard,—a fool who, for his own brutal gratification, would ruin his own health, and destroy all the comfort of others into the bargain. It was his principle, he said; and he's a very sensible and determined young gentleman as ever you came across when he chooses it; and it's a word and a blow with him when once he's made up his mind to it. . . . It's a fine place, this Palermo, for that's the name of the town we are living at, and many English there is in it; and who should be here but Mr. and Mrs. Darby and Miss Augusta, and the rest of 'em, as gay as any thing. But master don't go much into company; he's fond of being solitary like, and wanders about taking views of these bays and mountains, which, to be sure, are as beautiful as heaven itself. He's a very famous drawer is my young master, as he calls it,—painter, I say, for he uses all manner of colours, which he carries in a tin box about with him. I think master indeed must be in love, he's so fond of his own company, only he never writes or gets

a letter ; and he's not in love with any body here, I'll be sworn."

She turned hastily to look at the seal again—that most provoking seal ! there were a few little tips of letters, that was all.

She returned the letter to Mrs. Levet ; there was nothing to be made of it.

CHAPTER VI.

Across a bare, wide common, I was toiling,
With anxious steps, that by the slippery ground
Were baffled.—WORDSWORTH.

THE villa of Rupert Usherwood, Esq. M.P., Director of this, and Governor of that ; the man of much display and of much apparent wealth, but who, some said—but whether they said truly or not, nobody knew, for certainly as many said just the contrary—was but as many a fair, ripe walnut, which if cracked would be found to contain mere nothing ;—the villa of Rupert Usherwood, Esq. was situated upon the reverse of the Wimbledon Hills, surrounded with those magnificent shrubberies which are the glory of our English villas, and commanding a very fine view to the southwards.

The house was in the Grecian style, which dated it as of about two generations old, that

being about the date of that taste in architecture, which has now given way to the rage for the Elizabethan ; which Elizabethan is, no doubt, admirably adapted to harmonise with the character of our climate, only it has one great defect—the smallness of the openings in its windows—against which a caveat ought to be entered, especially as regards poor-houses, hospitals, schools, or any of those buildings erected to contain accumulated numbers, attention to whose health ought surely to outweigh all considerations drawn from the sublime and beautiful.

Let private men, if they choose, smother their families in ill-ventilated houses in order to maintain the symmetry of external proportions ; let them confine the admission of the air to these narrow openings, and abandon the sash and still more desirable French window, because nobody can prevent them doing as seemeth them best : but let an abundant supply of fresh air be the first requisite in every plan for buildings intended for the accommodation of the multitude.

The large French windows at Mr. Usherwood's villa, opening wide and admitting the air abundantly, rendered his house so pleasant and healthy that you will not wonder at the bright eyes and rosy cheeks of the three elder young ladies, whose emancipation from the schoolroom enabled them to enjoy to the utmost extent that most delicious

air of Wimbledon, not only as it breathed freshly into their own pleasant sitting-rooms, but on horseback, or in open carriages, all the day long.

They led the pleasantest life that it seems possible for giddy young people to dream of, surrounded by admirers, their tables covered with invitation-cards, their heads filled with dress, polkas, and flirtations, their hearts as empty as their minds,—mere flutterers over the world's surface, and most exactly calculated for the element in which they existed.

Mademoiselle's negligence in the schoolroom had, at least, averted the evil effects upon health which might have arisen from the active mother's too perpetual demands upon time and strength. They had done very little, while Mrs. Usherwood believed they were employed from morning to night; and their acquirements were of the most superficial description: but their constitutions had profited though their minds had suffered, and they now bloomed forth almost entirely uneducated, but very tall and handsome girls, and with spirits quite able to cope even with their domineering, determined mother.

Mrs. Usherwood, whose temper quite unfitted her for observing that happy medium which might have secured one advantage without sacrificing the other, having in some degree suspected this deficiency, had resolved to carry out her

plans more effectually as regarded her younger children ; and being at last, somewhat unfortunately as it proved, absolved from the absorbing task of filling the nursery, she had more leisure to look to these things herself. Her younger girls had therefore been kept hard at work under a regular governess of the horse-mill order, who went grinding on with undeviating regularity in one routine of constant unrelenting employment. The schoolroom had not French windows ; its one window was a sash, but one of that tantalising description which will open but a little way,—(the elder young ladies, by the by, had taken possession of their own old schoolroom to make themselves a morning-room),—of necessity it was close and ill-ventilated, consequently the little girls looked pale and sickly : they were besides fretful, cross, and very particularly conceited, for they really had been stuffed so full of acquirements, and had conceived such a very high opinion of themselves and their late *very* clever governess, that never was any thing so absurd.

The interregnum of the poor young lady whose health had failed under so short a trial had made them still more conceited and unmanageable than ever. Accustomed under her feeble sway to settle their affairs and arrange their tasks a good deal as they pleased, and to look down

with contempt upon one whose acquirements, in fact, did not in many respects equal their own, they were but too well prepared to receive the new comer, whatsoever she might prove, in a manner which promised to afford her much difficulty and vexation.

Angela arrived at the back-door in a fly, with two very, very humble-looking little boxes as her sole luggage, and was ushered by the under-housemaid into the room appropriated to her. It was a little place at the very top of the house, with a southern sun beating full upon the very shallow roof, and without a fire-place of any description. The little window looked into the back-yard, and the noise of servants with their loud and vulgar laughs, and the coarse rough tones of voice which it pleases so many of them to adopt when they think they are not overheard, might be distinguished from below.

The bed was small, and the furniture as shabby as possible; but Angela had not been used to luxury, and she cared little about it.

She hastily took off her bonnet and black shawl, arranged her hair and dress, and, looking exceedingly elegant and pretty, went down, escorted by the housemaid, to wait upon Mrs. Usherwood.

She found that lady in a splendid purple velvet pelisse and a most expensive bonnet, prepared to

enter her carriage to make her usual morning round of visits; but when she saw Miss Nevil she stopped, turned back, and received her with a great deal of cordiality, proposing, as time pressed, to accompany her immediately to the schoolroom, and to introduce her to her future pupils.

The door of the melancholy looking apartment, of considerable size, but lighted only by the above-mentioned very inadequate window, opened.

There was a rush as of girls running to their places, where, before their desks, the whole six were safely established when their lady-mother entered the room.

“Girls, let me introduce you to Miss Nevil, your new governess,” began their mamma; “and I hope you will be very industrious, and attentive to her instructions, and do credit to yourselves and to your papa and me.”

“Selina!”

“This is the eldest of them, Miss Nevil.”

As a tall, thin, long-necked, pale, very plain, but clever and intelligent-looking girl, with sharp eyes, high nose, thin lips, and scanty hair done up in the knot behind, which is the sign of approaching “coming out,” came forward, and with a half-insolent, half-tittering expression upon her face, presented her hand.

Elizabeth, next summoned, looked, for her age, much shorter than her sister. She was very thick, clumsily built, and her countenance was stupid, animal, and ill-humoured.

She gave her hand, stared into Angela's face, and returned to her chair.

"Theresa! why don't *you* come forward, Theresa?" said the mother, in a sharp, angry tone. "What are you doing there, keeping me waiting?"

The little girl thus addressed seemed to get down from her high, narrow-backed chair with some difficulty. She had a more interesting appearance than her sisters; for her face, though very sickly, and with the black eyes surrounded with that dark ring, a sign of ill health and suffering, was gentle, and rather pretty. But she looked dull, and, as her mother gave her rather a rough half shake, half push, as if to rouse her as she came slowly forward, held out her thin, hot hand, and, giving it to Angela, never looked up once, but returned to her chair.

"What's the matter with your sister to-day, Selina?" said the mother; "she's more stupid than ever, I think. What's the matter with you, Theresa? Can't you speak?"

"I've got such a bad headache," said Theresa.

"Oh, she's always a bad headache, I think,"

was Selina's remark, pertly ; " particularly whenever she's got any thing to do."

Three little children, Clara, Julia, and Madelina, laughing and pushing each other about in a rude way, looking pale, too, but strong and robust nevertheless, followed and shook hands in a very boisterous manner, romping and laughing.

" O you little mischiefs!" cried the mother. " Little darlings, they have such spirits! I don't know what you'll do with them, Miss Nevil : just like what I was at their age. O you little wretch! is this the way you shake hands with your new governess?" as one of the children gave her a boisterous swing by the arm. " You sad tomboy! Go, get away to your places again—do you hear me?—and be very good, and mind all that Miss Nevil says, you little rude pets! or she will have a rod in pickle for you. Won't you, Miss Nevil? Good morning." And the lady-mother swept out of the room.

The instant she was gone, the little girls lifted up their heads as by one accord, stared hard at Angela, then at one another; and all, with the exception of Theresa, who sat leaning with her head upon her hand, burst into rude, tittering laughter.

Angela was so perfectly new to her situation, that the rudeness of these children disconcerted

her for a moment; but she soon rallied her spirits, and looking round at them steadily, as she stood there before them, she said,—

“Well, young ladies,” directing her look more particularly to the elder ones, “I am sorry to begin our acquaintance by discovering that you have not good breeding enough to know how to practice common civility to a stranger. I have been accustomed to good manners at the place where I came from, and I shall expect them to be practised here. Miss Selina, you will be pleased not to keep making signs to your sister. Don’t you know that it is very rude? Little girls, be quiet, and keep your places, when I bid you. Theresa, my dear, does your head ache so very much?”

“Oh, it does ache so!” and the tears swelled to the poor girl’s eyes. “It aches so, I do not know what to do with myself; and nobody will believe it.”

“It’s not likely they should, Miss Nevil,” put in Selina, addressing her governess with an air of assurance; “for they never come on but at lesson times. She can be always well enough when she’s out in the open air. I believe she’d play in the garden, and be among the flowers, all the day long, if mamma would let her: but, luckily, mamma is up to it all.”

“Would you like to go out now, my dear?” said Angela. “It is just one o’clock; I should think your lessons must be over for the present. Are you allowed to go out alone into the shrubberies, or have you a maid to go out with you?”

“Alone!” cried Selina, “as if No, Miss Nevil, mamma *never* allows us to be one moment alone; it’s quite her rule.”

“Then who goes out with you?”

“Our governess, to be sure! Who else should, do you think?” with a rude laugh.

“Speak without laughing, when there is nothing to laugh at, if you please,” said Angela, authoritatively. “And now tell me when you dine, and what has been the usual routine of your day,” sitting down, and taking up pen and paper.

“That’s my pen and my paper!” said Elizabeth, angrily. “Why can’t you use Selina’s? Every body takes my things.”

Angela restored the pen and paper with a look of contempt, and said,—

“I am very sorry to see you so captious about such a trifle. Who will give me a piece of paper, till I have opened my own writing-desk?”

Theresa opened her little desk hastily, took out a quire of her best-loved note-paper with pink edges, and with a new pen, and presented them in silence.

“Thank you, my dear,” said Angela, kindly.

“That’s always the way she does,” muttered Elizabeth; “always setting herself up for the best!”

“What is that you are saying, Elizabeth? If you wish to equal her, imitate her.”

“Imitate Theresa!” said Selina, with a toss of her head; “well, that’s too good!”

“The order of the day,” said Angela, “if you please. When I have seen how your time has been arranged, I then can make what alterations in the plan I think proper.”

“Oh, I don’t think you will be allowed to make any alterations at all,” put in Selina. “Mamma arranged all this with Miss Carter long ago; and she was so excessively clever, and we got on so amazingly with her, that every body was surprised at us.”

“Half-past six, enter school, read a chapter in the Bible, and prayers; class of German verbs; breakfast at eight. German exercises, Italian exercises, Spanish exercises, modern Greek exercises, Latin grammar, and Greek St. John, according to the Hamiltonian method; Pinnock’s Questions, and an exercise in Pestalozzi’s Mother’s Book for the little ones, till one. Gymnastics; dinner at two, and walk till three. Repetitions of poetry, grammar, questions in geology, history, astronomy, chemistry, botany. Eight o’clock,

younger girls to bed; elder girls and governess down to tea, in the drawing-room. Half-past eight, retire; nine, governess retires."

This is the catalogue of employments which Selina, with considerable triumph in her manner, ran through, as desired.

When she had done, she looked up at her new governess with a look of considerable exultation, as much as to say,—

"There,—what do you think of that?" and kept eyeing her in a manner half curious, half insolent.

"You ought to be amazingly clever young ladies, indeed," said Angela, quietly; "but I want very much to know—when is the time for play?"

"Play!" cried Selina, who seemed to take upon herself to be the spokeswoman for the party; "as if we had any time for play! The little ones, to be sure, play a little: I forgot to say, they go out in the garden with nurse half an hour before we have done."

"And they seem able to play in the school-room, besides," said Angela, smiling at them good-humouredly; for she could not help being amused with their exuberant spirits, which were now being expended in all sorts of ridiculous monkey tricks, as they sat there with nothing to do. "But, little girls, mind me!"

They answered like clock-work to the word of command, and sat straight as arrows, but inclined to pout at being called "little girls," and told to "mind" in this decided manner.

"The schoolroom is not the place to play in. When you have done your lessons, you shall go and play somewhere else, and laugh, and make as much noise as you please. And now," looking at Theresa, "as it is the first day, let us all go out walking together, that we may get better acquainted; and you shall shew me the flower-garden and shrubberies."

This was much too agreeable a proposal not to be cheerfully acceded to.

The little girls went up to put on their things, and soon returned, buried in immense bonnets, calculated to exclude every ray of the sun, and to which were appended capacious brown-holland tippets; then Angela, taking Theresa by the hand, they all went down the back-stairs, and through a small door out of the back-hall into the pleasure-grounds.

The day was bright and cheering—a fine calm day, at the very latter end of October; they walked through the fine shrubberies, by the pools of water dark and clear as in a picture of Ruysdael's; the pendant willows hanging over them, and beautifully garlanding their sides. They visited the flower-garden, laid out upon a lawn

surrounded by a shrubbery of rare trees — the rarest and most expensive trees ; to say nothing of rhododendrons six feet high ; tree-roses of every possible variety ; in short, beautiful shrubs of every description, which you must fancy for yourselves, for I am not botanist enough to enumerate them.

Briefly, no expense, it was evident, had been spared in any way ; indeed, this flower-garden was the admiration of every body ; and it was pronounced quite wonderful, that, with her sixteen children, and performing the duties of wife and mother in so exemplary a manner, as was known to be the case, Mrs. Usherwood should find leisure to attend to her garden, and exhibit so much taste in the disposition of her walks and parterres : for she took all the credit of it to herself. It only happened that she had a very clever and very expensive gardener to arrange these things for her, which he did at twice or thrice the necessary cost, and robbing her of most of her best flowers besides.

The fact was, in her vain endeavour to do every thing, she effected nothing ; and, through her idle ambition to outshine the rest of the world in every way, was disliked by every body about her, and always out at elbows.

She endeavoured to make up for the unnecessary expenses of one department by the meanest

saving in others, and to reconcile economy and waste, profusion and order, discipline and neglect. Her life was thus one vast miscalculation, injurious to every single being dependent upon her.

She was not a bad-hearted woman in the main, perhaps. She was better, after all, than her daughters, who, reared according to the newest improved fashion of these days, were perfectly odious.

At eight o'clock the schoolroom door was opened by a footman, with—

“Mrs. Usherwood’s compliments, and requests the company of Miss Nevil, with the young ladies, in the drawing-room.”

It was what the girls called “a company day.” So, in expectation of the summons, they had been dressed in clean muslin frocks, with abundance of pink riband run into the hems, laced across the bosoms, and bowed about the sleeves; and their anxiety about how they should look, and their goings and comings to the glass, and their ill-humour with their maids, was quite a miniature imitation of their elder sisters’ behaviour, and would have been very ridiculous if it had not been very disagreeable.

"As for Theresa, she's not to go down to tea," Selina had said.

"And why not, pray?"

"Oh, Miss Carter never let her go down when she'd got a headache. She said it was the only way to cure her of such a bad habit."

"Does your head ache now, Theresa?"

"No, not at all."

"Would you like to go down?"

"Yes, very much indeed."

"Make yourself ready, then."

"No, but I'm sure she mustn't go down," said Selina, with an anxious look. "I'm sure she ought not to go down: Miss Carter used to say, she'd never cure herself of her headaches if she wasn't mortified for them. She'd always be thinking herself ill. Now didn't she, Elizabeth?"

"Yes, to be sure," said Elizabeth, "she was always angry when Theresa said she'd a headache; but I think she was very unjust."

"Well but, Miss Nevil," persisted Selina, "I'm sure you ought not to let her go down."

"Will your mamma be displeased, when she hears you have had a headache, if I let you go down?"

"Mamma never takes any notice about it," said the little girl.

"What does that signify?" said Selina. "I'm sure Miss Carter wouldn't have let her go."

“ Well,” said Angela, “ I have seen a good many things that have surprised me to-day, Selina ; but the most astonishing of all you have kept for the last. If I had not seen it myself, nothing could have persuaded me that any one could be so anxious to deny their sister a pleasure ; and merely, as it seems to me, for the pleasure of denying it. Did you ever, now, in the whole of your life—old as you are, and clever as you, perhaps, are—ask yourself why you were endeavouring to prevent your sister’s enjoyment ?”

Selina looked surprised, and coloured.

“ I don’t know what you mean,” she said, sulkily.

“ No, I do not suppose that you do : you seem to me entirely unaccustomed to take account of your own heart. But we will say no more about this just now ; we shall know each other better presently, I hope. Theresa, put on your evening frock.”

Poor Theresa obeyed with a glance of delight at Miss Nevil, and of triumph at Selina, who answered her by a frown.

Angela stood by marking all these different expressions of temper and character with an observing eye. Her spirits rose to the task before her. All girls at her age take a certain pleasure in the contest with, and the subjugation of, injustice and wrong. They have more spirit and less

indulgence than the more experienced ; and rush into the strife with a heedless bravery, which often exposes them to difficulty.

In the case before us, Angela, perhaps too early and too openly expressed her disapprobation, and set herself in opposition to the faults of those committed to her care ; and yet, I know not how, there is something noble in this high, unbroken spirit—this defiance of difficulty in a brave-minded girl, that is true. One cannot help delighting in the exuberance of that energy which time will inevitably subdue ; and in the clear, unmodified sense of what is right and wrong, which a wider experience of human nature will soften down to a greater indulgence.

Selina did not quite hate her new governess for the home truths she uttered. In justice to this disagreeable, but not altogether ill-conditioned girl, so much must be confessed. The truth was, Angela looked so clever, had something about her, after all, so charming, that she already had captivated Selina's fancy, to a certain degree. As for Theresa, treated kindly for almost the first time of her life, her heart began to be already filling with a warm affection.

She had never loved any one before but the wet-nurse who reared her, and who had continued in the nursery as one of the under-nurse-maids for a year or two afterwards ; defending

the poor sickly child, with all her might and power, in the many fights and struggles of that stormy place. The little delicate and fretful child had, indeed, a poor chance there, and was sure, in every contention, to get the worst of it. A battle with head-nurse in her behalf had occasioned the dismissal of poor Jenny Sparks; and after her departure, which the poor child felt with an anguish of desolation not to be described, she moped about, silent, sulky, disregarded,—in that sort of torpid, half-dreaming existence of misery, which those who have spent this portion of life as sickly children too often unheeded do, have described to me.

The door opened and displayed an immense drawing-room, blazing with the light of multitudes of wax candles, and resounding with the not very subdued tones, which proceeded from a large party of gentlemen and ladies, talking away as fast as possible.

The *coup d'œil* was magnificent. Gilded cornices; walls wreathed with many-coloured flowers; brocatelle curtains of purple and gold; a carpet of crimson and gold colour; tables with tablecloths of velvet, and fringed with gold; sofas, settees, causeuses, fauteuils, cabriole chairs framed in white and gold, chiffoniers, mirrors, giran-

doles, and screens resplendent with gold—gold here, gold there, gold every where. Moreover there were marble busts, enamelled snuff-boxes, Japan cabinets, Dresden china, Bohemian glass, flowers, pictures and lap-dogs.

The list looks something like an upholsterer's catalogue, and some ill-natured people would say the room looked rather like an upholsterer's shop; but you must scatter all these objects about in the most approved taste, and mingle with the gold here, gold there, gold every where, abundance of showy colours, abundance of splendid mirrors, abundance of light, and abundance of flowers (for so it was that Mrs. Usherwood liked to have things), and you will own it looked brilliant and not so bad after all. And thus it was also that the tall, broad-chested, well-shaped, handsome-faced, rather pompous gentleman, with his still brown hair carefully brushed up so as to conceal a commencing baldness, liked to have things too.

And so did those three tall dashing girls, who, something in imitation of the three Graces in a groupe of Sèvres china, stood together, leaning against the side of the bay-window, laughing and flirting to extremity with a circle of gentlemen standing before them. Every body was talking, and seemed enjoying themselves. Angela, holding Theresa by the hand, and preceded by the two others, glided in.

Nobody took the slightest notice of her, which made her feel rather awkward and uncomfortable; Selina and Elizabeth made their way immediately into the midst of the circle, with the most perfect *sang froid* and assurance; and she was left behind, standing alone with Theresa.

She, however, advanced a little, and taking a chair, sat down as near the mistress of the house as she possibly could, she being the only person present to whom she had ever addressed a syllable, and strove to overcome the very disagreeable and oppressive feeling of shyness which was creeping over her.

Mrs. Usherwood, splendidly arrayed in a crimson velvet dress, with a profusion of rich lace, a good many diamonds, and with a turban of crimson cashmere and gold upon her head, looked almost overwhelmingly handsome and important.

She, however, turned and condescended to acknowledge Angela by a little nod of the head, and then appearing to conclude, as a matter of course, that she would sit down a little apart from the rest, performing the part of a perfect cipher, and neither speak nor expect to be spoken to, resumed the conversation she was engaged in. It is very easy to treat these little mortifications, to which young women in obscure situations are thus exposed in society, as mere trifles unworthy their regard: but I know few

more depressing sensations than that of thus feeling alone amid busy and animated crowds — than this learning how inferior to, and in fact how perfectly valueless in the eyes of any one present, such a person is. I believe these feelings are what governesses, poor things! often suffer from very much; more than is reasonable perhaps, but not more than is natural.

The little timid girl who still held Angela's hand, and seemed to crouch up to her for protection, certainly bestowed as much comfort as she received upon this occasion.

"I have at least a companion in my misery," thought she to herself; and then her natural spirits, which had been damped at first, began to rise. She laughed within herself at her own susceptibility, and took refuge, like the merry cobbler, in the reflection, that if all these fine people cared not for her, neither did she care for them: so she was soon able to amuse herself with looking about her.

The three girls, standing leaning against the pilasters of the bay-window, attracted her attention immediately, and she asked Theresa, in a low voice, who they were.

"That's sisters," was the answer.

There was such a crowd of gentlemen assembled at this place, that several of those who sat at the other end of the room were completely

hidden behind them. The little girl pointed out her papa, and some others of the company; however, at last there was a little stir in the crowd assembled round the Miss Usherwoods. A young—a very young man, an officer in some showy regiment, appeared half to prostrate himself before Miss Matilda, the youngest of the three; and after much delay, and a great deal of affectation, she suffered herself to be led to the pianoforte, the crowd following:—

“Oh!” exclaimed the little girl, in a glad whisper, as this movement displayed those sitting behind, “look, Miss Nevil, if there isn’t Miss Grant!”

A very dark-eyed and dark-complexioned lady, with coal-black hair braided simply round her face, was sitting there; she was dressed richly, but with extreme simplicity, in a black brocaded silk, with a fall of fine guipure, and the black velvet round her neck fastened with a small rose of a few fine diamonds; one or two hair bracelets, and one of black velvet upon each arm, completed her costume.

A figure erect without stiffness—an outline simple without severity—a dignity without affectation—an air of serenity and vigour combined,—such was her appearance: her features were plain, rather rudely than coarsely cut—a thick mouth—a thick nose,—Why do I enter into

such details? But over the whole countenance was disposed an expression of intelligence and benevolence at once; and when she spoke, such a delightful sweetness was visible round her mouth, that it was impossible to conceive an appearance at once more attractive or more striking.

Such was Joan Grant, now forty years of age.

She sat by an old lady excessively overdressed and covered with jewels, though her head was shaking with palsy, and her face furrowed over with wrinkles.

“That’s Miss Grant—Aunt Joan—as we sometimes call her in fun,” said little Theresa. “She’s an old maid, Selina says; but she’s so good-natured, you can’t think.”

The singing had by this time begun; Miss Matilda warbled like any nightingale. Miss Grant, as Angela observed, seemed to listen with attention for a short time; then, as if the music did not please her, she turned her head away, and began to turn over some drawings which lay upon the table beside her.

When the strain had ceased, she lifted up her head again, saw the little Theresa, and made a sign to her to come across the room. The little girl, evidently delighted, let Angela’s hand drop and sprang forward directly.

“O little miss! where are you going to in such a hurry?” said her father, stopping her.

“To Miss Grant—to Aunt Joan: she nodded to me to come.”

“So so,” said the papa; “are you a favourite of Miss Grant’s, then?”

He took his little girl by the hand, and walking up to where Joan sat, said:—

“I am sure Miss Grant is extremely kind to notice my poor shabby little girl, but here she is at your service. Have you heard Matilda sing before?” he went on: “rather a fine voice, is it not? I have heard a very good judge say it has power sufficient to fill the San Carlos at Naples, which I believe is reckoned the largest *salle de théâtre* in Europe.”

“Very possibly—it is a powerful voice. My dear little Theresa, I am very glad to see you in the drawing-room to-night: you very seldom come down, I think.”

“I’ve always a headache,” said the little girl, pressing up to her and speaking in a confidential little whisper. “But look there, we’ve got a new governess, and she seems very good-natured indeed, and she let me come.”

The dark eyes were turned upon Angela.

“Can that young lady be your governess, my dear?”

“ Yes, to be sure she is ; and I like her very much, indeed ; she’s so good-natured. But Selina and Elizabeth say they cannot bear her, for she’s so *very* poor.”

“ She seems an extremely nice young lady. I hope you will all be good, and mind her as much as you can, for she looks very young and delicate ; and it’s harder, my love, to have to teach lessons than to learn them : which all children should recollect, my little Theresa.”

Theresa felt as if this were a fact she could *not* admit.

There was at this moment a little additional noise and stir at the pianoforte, and,—

“ No, I protest I won’t ! how can you plague me so ? I won’t play the accompaniment, I say ; it’s too hard. Lucy, will you play it for me ?”

“ Not I,” said Lucy, who had just sat down to a game of *écarté* with Colonel Prendergrass ; “ you ought to learn to play your own accompaniments.”

“ But this is such a beautiful song,” persisted the young lieutenant,—the one who had made the mock prostration to induce Miss Matilda to sing ; “ and I am so passionately fond of it. And,” smiling in a most insinuating way, “ I am sure you could play the accompaniment if you would only *try* ! Besides, there’s your elder sister, shall I ask her ?”

“It’s no use asking her,” said Matilda; “for she can’t, in the first place; and she wouldn’t, in the second.”

“My dear, what is all this about?” said Mrs. Usherwood, sailing up to the pianoforte. “Dear Matilda, why don’t you go on? You know Miss Grant,” she whispered, “is so excessively fond of music.”

“I don’t care if she is,” said Matilda, pettishly. “I don’t see why I am always to be made the slave to entertain Miss Grant.”

“But it’s not only Miss Grant,” entreated the young lieutenant, “but to please me.”

This young lieutenant was the second son of an Irish viscount. The Miss Usherwoods were very proud, and so was Mrs. Usherwood, of having got him to their parties. Matilda was all graciousness to him, at least, whatever she might be to others; besides, she reckoned him her own admirer.

“But I really can’t sing this song, mamma, that he’s bothering me about. I really can’t play the accompaniment,—it’s too hard.”

“Where’s Lucy?”

“Oh, she’s playing cards with old Colonel Prendergrass! She wouldn’t come away to save my life.”

The mother glanced that way, and was satisfied.

“ But do try it yourself,—now do !” pleaded the lieutenant.

“ But when I tell you I can’t !”

“ Oh, now I think of it,” said Mrs. Usherwood, “ stay a moment, Matilda ! I’ll find somebody who, I dare say, can play the accompaniment.”

And she went up to Angela, who was now sitting perfectly alone.

“ Miss Nevil, you play pretty well on the piano, I know. I wish you’d just step this way, and go through the accompaniment of ‘ La Gioja,’ which Matilda wants to sing !”

She rose at once, as bidden, and feeling very oddly at this first initiation into the part assigned to her of a sort of domestic puppet, who was to speak or be silent, go or come, at the behest of others ; yet, conscious how excessively disobliging and out of place any hesitation upon her part would appear, she moved towards the pianoforte.

The crowd of gentlemen fell back as she approached, and gazed upon her with great surprise and admiration ; while Matilda eyed the beautiful girl from head to foot with a countenance expressive of any thing rather than satisfaction, and a sort of wondering questioning in her eye, as much as to say, “ And who on earth have we here ?”

The deep mourning which Angela wore con-

cealed the simplicity, not to say poverty, of her toilette. For any thing Miss Matilda knew, she might be a lady as well as herself; and she certainly did not want so young and so beautiful a lady to come forward and take her place at the pianoforte,—to trespass, perhaps, upon her preserves.

She seemed to wait for an introduction, but, seeing that none was made, and that Miss Nevil came up to the pianoforte, saying, simply,—

“Is this the accompaniment I am to play?”

Matilda turned round to her mother for explanation, while the young lieutenant bent down his head, and began to talk assiduously to the new performer.

“Your sisters’ new governess, that’s all! Make yourself easy, my dear!” And Mrs. Usherwood glided away.

“Can you play it, do you think?” said Matilda, bluntly, now returning to the pianoforte. “It’s very hard.”

“I think I can manage it,” turning the leaves over and looking at the music; “but it is difficult to accompany a person well that one has not been accustomed to hear sing. I hope I shall not put you out.”

“Well, only do your best.”

The fingers running brilliantly over the keys (it was so long since she had enjoyed the plea-

sure of touching them), and a short but beautiful little prelude, was the only answer to this ; and then the song began.

The power of natural genius in music is a gift almost incredible : the effects produced by it are unaccountable, almost magical.

Every one who loved music in the room was attracted to the pianoforte. Miss Grant, though attentively listening, sat still, however, holding by the little Theresa's hand.

It was a very different description of music from any she had been accustomed to hear proceeding from that pianoforte. So much taste, truth, and musical feeling, in the accompaniment, that Matilda seemed to catch something of the same spirit, and her really fine and powerful voice was displayed to the greatest advantage. Her singing seemed quite unlike any thing that she had ever been known to produce before.

The song over, the applause was long and loud,—almost the whole of it, however, according to the common course of such things, being directed to the young lady of the house ; for Mrs. Usherwood having gone about whispering to all her guests that the young person who shewed so great a talent for music was a new governess she had just been so fortunate as to engage for her younger daughters, the talents

of one whose business it was to have talents were disregarded.

But there was one who bent his head down to her, his young and pleasant face colouring with admiration and pleasure, and said,—

“How beautifully you do play! I have heard a good deal of music. My sisters are very fine players, I believe; they were pupils of Osborne’s at Paris, and have lessons every spring from Madame Belville Oury. But I never heard any one play like you in my life.”

She turned up her face and thanked him for the little compliment, and more for the polite attention he shewed. Politeness in such moments is really almost precious to the feelings.

He thought he had never seen such a sweet pair of eyes in his life before.

And, bending his pretty head still a little lower, he went on,—

“You cannot think how excessively, foolishly, fond of music I am. I play a little upon the pianoforte sometimes myself; but, with my great big hands, I don’t know how it is, I cannot bring out half the tone you do with those delicate little fingers of yours. There is an art in it which I never can comprehend. And my sisters, even, they do not do half so much with the instrument as you can.”

Her hands were upon the keys, and her answer to this was again a beautiful capriccio, improvised for the occasion. Restored to her pianoforte, flushed and excited by what had passed, she certainly felt a little inspired, and as if it were almost impossible to help playing; but she was also playing, because she did not well know what else to do. She did not quite feel sure whether she ought to rise from the instrument or not, and it was so awkward and disagreeable sitting there doing nothing, so she let her impatient fingers take their own way.

Before she had played half-a-dozen bars there was a general silence, so strong is the power of truly beautiful music over almost every human ear. There are some airs—some tones—which no one can resist: even the passion for talking while music is going on will, in a few rare instances, yield to the irresistible enchantment.

The little crowd round the pianoforte fell back in mute attention; even Lucy and old Colonel Prendergrass turned, raised their heads, and laid down their cards. Miss Grant rose, and, with Theresa still in her hand, approached the instrument.

Angela had, however, soon finished her improvisation, and then took her hands from the keys, and looked round to see whether Miss Matilda was going to sing again.

The young lieutenant looked round, too; but Matilda had disappeared, — offended, chagrined, and envious, she had sat down at the other end of the room.

“Never mind her,” whispered Lieutenant O’Hara (for that was his name), bending down again and addressing Angela. “She’s gone away; she’ll come and sing some more soon. Do, in the mean time, play us something else; if it be not troublesome and disagreeable to you, I mean.”

“Miss Nevil,” said Mrs. Usherwood, coming forward, “there is Miss Grant perfectly enchanted with your music, and asks me to introduce you to her, and I have promised her you will play her another piece.”

Angela rose, and was presented to Miss Grant, who, looking at her with an air of so much kindness that it made her very heart warm to her, said, politely, —

“I am very fond of music, and it is a long time since I have heard any playing that gave me so much pleasure as yours. If it would not be asking too much, Miss Nevil, perhaps you will let me hear you once again.”

“Her name is Nevil, is it?” said the young lieutenant to himself. “What a sweet, pretty name! and what a deuced pretty creature she is!”

“I shall have the greatest pleasure,” said An-

gela, in reply to Miss Grant, sitting down to the instrument with the most cheerful alacrity, and looking ten times more charming for the pleasure she had just received. It was a relief from her new position, in which she still felt so awkward. To be introduced like any other young lady, and to be addressed with so much courtesy, she felt restored to her natural position. She was Captain Nevil's daughter again.

She sat down and played a wild, plaintive, Scotch air—so wild, so sweetly plaintive, that it thrilled through the heart of most present; and then it was followed by one of those beautiful fantasias, those intricacies of harmony long drawn out, the untwisting of which affords such strange gratification to the ear.

Miss Grant listened with much attention and evident pleasure, and this seemed to give the cue to others; for Miss Grant, you will observe, was a person of considerable importance in this circle, where wealth was almost every thing: so every body was, or affected to be, quite delighted. The young lieutenant was so without affectation.

“Well,” he said, when it was over, “I never heard such a delightful finger in my life! The air is exquisite, too! Where did you get it from? Some people get such charming music to play. I wish my sisters would. Well, I must not ask for any more, I suppose; but if *you* would, Miss

Grant Every body does what you wish them, you know. Do ask her for another, Miss Grant,—do !”

“ I hope Matilda Usherwood is going to give us another song,” was Joan’s reply. “ Mrs. Usherwood is asking her.”

And so she was.

Mrs. Usherwood was endeavouring to persuade her offended and envious daughter to come forward again.

“ Now, Matilda, how can you be so foolish ! Every body is waiting to hear you sing. I can’t think what’s the matter with you this evening !” the mother was saying. “ There is Mr. O’Hara looking round for you. Come along !”

“ I’m sure he doesn’t care the least in the world whether I sing or not !” was the young lady’s reply, turning her back upon the pianoforte and upon her mother, and throwing herself backwards in her chair, with a manner as resolved and obstinate as when a mule plants his fore feet before him.

“ Now, Mr. O’Hara,” said Mrs. Usherwood, going up to him, “ do persuade dear Matilda to sing another song. She is so diffident, dear creature ; she never thinks any thing she can do worth hearing. Matilda, here’s Mr. O’Hara beseeching you to sing !”

“ Eh, madam ?—yes ; oh, I beg your pardon !

Do, dear Miss Matilda, sing us one more song. You declare you won't? Nay, that is too cruel! Must I go down upon my knees again?" repeating the sort of half-ironical prostration. "No you won't?—Very wrong!—now really—'pon honour!"

And he returned to the pianoforte again.

"She won't sing," said he, again bending down his head to Angela, and speaking in a low voice. "She's as obstinate as a mule; it's no use asking her: so you can give us one little thing more, if you will, you know. Do, pray, be so very good-natured. Do ask her, now, Miss Grant: won't you?"

"No," said Joan, who had lost nothing of her old sincerity, nothing of her old desire to do good to every body, and who had discernment to observe the storm of jealousy and ill-will which was already brooding in Miss Matilda's gentle breast; "I should not think of trespassing upon Miss Nevil's good nature any further."

And so saying, she turned away from the pianoforte, and resumed her place by the withered, palsied, overdressed old lady, who was no other than her mother, our old friend Ellen.

Ellen, after her removal to Widdrington, had become, as might have been anticipated, a very grand lady, indeed; and as she was still of "no particular age," as Mrs. Mitten has it, and, moreover, very good-looking for that age, whatever it

might be ; and as her daughter never furnished her with matter of interest by making conquests — a thing she seemed to hold in absolute abhorrence—Ellen was obliged, in mere self-defence, to set about making conquests for herself. She had a good fortune of her own, for, after Michael's death, the whole of the money she had brought into the family had been restored to her ; and she had contrived to captivate a certain Mr. Richard Vining, head of one of the manufacturing firms in the neighbourhood of Norman's Bridge, and younger brother of the very Mrs. Usherwood in whose drawing-room you have now the honour to be.

Mr. Richard Vining possessed a villa situated at no great distance from the splendid one of Mr. Usherwood ; and here, having no children, Ellen was allowed to display all her taste for finery of every description. She fitted up her house in the most expensive and luxurious manner that could be devised, and thought herself a really grand lady. This connexion, and the near neighbourhood of the two villas, had produced considerable intimacy between Mrs. Vining and the family of the Usherwoods, in which, of course, Joan, in her frequent visits to her mother, took part. Indeed, it being generally known that Miss Grant was a person of very great wealth, without natural heirs, and it not being expected that she would marry, her

acquaintance was much sought after by the world in general, and by the family of the Usherwoods in particular.

She seemed to be an object for general speculation and pillage. The pillage she resisted, for, though open-handed and generous-hearted as hand or heart could be, she was neither weak nor lavish in the expenditure of her large fortune, and well justified the opinion her grandfather had early formed of her.

She was neither to be duped nor flattered into wasting her money. The speculations, however, of those, even the most remotely connected with her, it was impossible to prevent; nor could she help the obsequious distinction with which it pleased the fathers and mothers of many a large family of children to treat her: and this was peculiarly the case in the present instance.

Mr. and Mrs. Usherwood, as my discerning friends will have discovered, were, in spite of all their ostentatious display of wealth, in reality, with their immense family, in somewhat embarrassed circumstances; and this exemplary wife and mother, as she considered herself, was always upon the watch to seize upon every advantage, and profit by every opportunity of getting any thing from any body which might present itself.

Upon this most auspicious connexion through Mrs. Vining she founded great hopes, and, as

well as her husband, had immediately fastened upon Miss Grant, and chosen to enrol her as among their nearest connexions; and certainly they spared not any pains to establish their claim to such connexion, by treating her, upon every occasion, with the most marked respect and deference, — asking her advice upon all subjects when the slightest pretence for consulting her could be framed—speaking of her at all times as the most esteemed and valuable friend of the family—and playfully accustoming the children to call her Aunt Joan.

She understood these manœuvres perfectly: she did not encourage the flattery, but she did not altogether repel the intimacy. In so large a family, she thought opportunities might be afforded her of doing some real good, and her mother's near connexion with them excited an interest in their welfare. She did in this instance as she was accustomed to do in so many, many others—she seized the occasion of being of service to her fellow creatures, whether they particularly deserved her kindness or not. And in her quiet, judicious way, it is astonishing, merely by attention to this simple rule, what a vast sum of good she had during the course of her life effected.

The generous, energetic little girl, who, as a mere child, had accomplished so much for children

a little younger than herself, still pursued, in conjunction with many more extended objects—of which, perhaps, something may be said hereafter—the same generous and benevolent plan.

No suffering fellow-creature, be his condition what it might, or of whatever description his suffering, was by her unheeded. Stranger or enemy, erring or criminal, she never passed by upon the other side. And thus it happened that the great influence and power of interference, almost forced upon her by Mr. and Mrs. Usherwood's determination to make a near relation of her, instead of being contemptuously rejected, had been in some manner accepted by Miss Grant, as furnishing the means of averting some of the daily evils, and protecting some of the daily victims of the mistakes and errors, which she could not but observe in Mrs. Usherwood's system of government.

Fain would she, clear-sighted as she was, have used the influence she possessed in correcting those erroneous principles from whence these innumerable evils took rise; but this she found exceeded even her power. There is nothing people resent so much as the attempt to correct their principles of action; nothing to which they cling so obstinately as to their prejudices. Upon any given occasion they will, perhaps, endure to be told they are wrong; but the attempt

to enlighten them as to the common source of their errors is certain to be a ground of offence.

In this instance, to attempt to alter Mrs. Usherwood's views would have been indeed as vain as to endeavour to move mountains; and the case was no better as regarded her elder daughters. The elder Miss Usherwoods' education had been completed before Miss Grant had become acquainted with them, and, entrenched behind a double defence of ill-temper and self-conceit, remonstrance or advice was equally lost upon them. Moreover, with that sort of inclination to rebellion, merely for rebellion's sake—not uncommon with girls of this description—they seemed to set themselves in opposition to their mother's wishes merely because they were her wishes, and voted Joan Grant a horrid bore, because they saw how much both parents respected and observed her. The elder Miss Usherwoods she therefore took very little notice of, but she was interested in the younger children; and the poor sick governess, victim of Mrs. Usherwood's unceasing demands upon a delicate and feeble constitution—the difficulties and sufferings from which she was utterly incapable of conceiving—had been taken under her especial protection.

The refined and delicate appearance of Angela had excited her interest immediately. She was

well aware of the difficulties so young a creature would have to contend with in this ill-regulated household, and mentally she constituted herself her protector.

Even so early as this first evening she saw her in danger of falling a victim to the envious temper of Miss Matilda, who, as she knew well, would certainly, sooner or later, find the means of visiting upon her the present mortification.

Miss Grant had been a silent observer of all that was going on. The negligence with which the new governess was treated, was a matter too much of course to be made the subject of remark; but she was much struck with the composure which the young girl had maintained—and with her countenance and manner, so simple, so gentle, yet so dignified; equally free from jealous self-assertion as from servility—she began to feel more than usually interested about her. Well aware that a little notice from a person so highly regarded as herself would be the best service she could just now render her, she rose from her seat, and holding the little Theresa by the hand, crossed the room to where Angela was sitting alone.

Dismissed from the pianoforte as unceremoniously as she had been summoned there, she took a chair at no great distance, and was now engaged in turning over a portfolio of drawings

which lay upon the table before her; Mr. O'Hara, from behind Miss Matilda's chair, where he had placed himself to make his peace—for he was really a good-natured young fellow, and did not like to vex any one, least of all a young lady who seemed to care for him—casting many a furtive glance towards the place where she sat.

Miss Grant drew a chair beside her, and said—

“ I have brought your little charge back to you, Miss Nevil. I am very glad to see my friend Theresa in the drawing-room this evening.”

“ You are rather a pet of mine—are you not, Theresa? and I am always sorry when your headaches keep you away.”

This opening led to a conversation. Angela, gratified by this attention, which relieved her from a situation that as yet she was unaccustomed to, conversed with her usual spirit and intelligence, so that Miss Grant soon discovered she could be no ordinary person, and secretly rejoiced that Mrs. Usherwood had at last the eminent good fortune of placing her children in such apparently valuable hands.

“ She is a daughter of Captain Nevil of the 64th—a most unquestionable gentlewoman,” Mrs. Usherwood had whispered, with considerable satisfaction, as she pointed Angela out to Joan Grant's observation; and her deep mourn-

ing dress, the gravity of her youthful face, told, as Joan thought, the usual tale of the orphan daughter of some brave and unfortunate soldier obliged to eat the bread of dependance—nourishment which, in a family like this at least, she could not without much pain reflect, might prove so very bitter.

She was, however, far too discreet, too wise, not to be well aware that any ill-judged interference in such a case—any vain lamentations over the evils that must be encountered—any romantic indulgence of those feelings which might indispose Angela for the duties of the condition to which her poverty had condemned her, would be most injurious and unkind: but she had been taught by the experience of a painful life the truth of that saying—“A word spoken in due season, how good is it!” and had learned how sweet a cordial to the soul is a friend in the hour of adversity; and that friend she at once resolved to endeavour to prove—and those words, as the season might present itself, to speak.

She had been a frequent guest in Mrs. Usherwood's schoolroom during the reign of the last ill-fated governess, and had observed, with considerable anxiety, the singularly unpromising dispositions of some of the children; so that she was fully aware of the struggle it must prove, especially for one so young and apparently inex-

perienced as Miss Nevil, to maintain her ground against the opposition and her spirits amid the host of evils she would have to encounter. And this, united to an approbation of her sentiments and manners, which was increasing every moment, gave that peculiar gentleness and kindness to her tones, which had made Joan such a treasure of consolation, and such an object of love, to those who knew her.

Angela was little likely to resist such feelings: she found her affections already attracted in a strange manner, and looked up at that good, that kind, that sensible face, with confidence, as to some benign and superior intelligence.

Life is not a mere chapter of accidents. Such unlooked-for sources of support in cases of extremity—such sudden fountains in the wilderness, must have come under the experience of every one.

“ I do not know what new laws and institutions, Miss Nevil, you mean to introduce into your schoolroom,” Joan had ended by saying, as she rose to go away, “ but I have long been a permitted visitor there, more particularly during Miss Freeman’s reign; and if you will allow me, I feel very much tempted to continue the practice. I believe there is no fear of Mrs. Usherwood making any objection, she is so kind as to let me consider myself rather a privileged person in this family.”

“ Oh, do come!” said the little Theresa, with beseeching eyes. “ Do let her come, Miss Nevil. Miss Freeman always did, and was so glad when we heard her steps upon the stairs. Wasn’t she, Aunt Joan?”

Aunt Joan only patted her cheek, and called her a prattler, and said, “ You see, Miss Nevil, Theresa adds her testimony to confirm what I say.”

“ I shall be so excessively glad; it will be such a very, very great pleasure to me,” said Angela.

But she cast a hesitating glance at Mrs. Usherwood; in spite of what Miss Grant had just said, she did not know how far she was to consider herself at liberty to receive visitors into her schoolroom.

“ Oh!” said Joan, understanding her look at once, “ I will settle all with Mrs. Usherwood: you are quite right to require her permission.”

The permission was granted with all the graciousness, and more than graciousness, with which such a petition from Miss Grant was certain to be received; and after that Miss Grant and her mother went away.

And now the young lieutenant, who had watched for her departure with some impatience, quitting the back of Miss Matilda’s chair, came forward, and immediately seized upon and occupied the seat just left vacant.

“I am so glad to have got it!” said he, with his usual bluntness. “I thought that precious Miss Grant would never go away. Every body thinks so much of her: she’s not pretty, do you think? I wanted to talk to you a little more about your delightful playing. Where were you taught? I never heard such execution, or, better than that, such exquisite taste before.”

Angela was about to answer; but, turning her face that way, she caught a view of Miss Matilda’s, filled with such an expression of envy and ill-humour, that, quite confounded, she cast down her eyes, and could only say,—

“I have had no masters—my mother taught me.”

“What a wonderful woman your mother must have been then! And now I am going, humbly to beg your pardon if I am intrusive, yet to take the liberty of asking you a question, which I very much want to have answered; Where does your father live? and where do you come from? for you are quite a stranger to us all here.”

“My father is not living; I arrived here only this morning. You do not seem to be aware that I am here as governess to the young ladies.”

“Oh!” exclaimed he, as if in great and not very pleasant surprise, and pushing his chair a little back as if to consider her more completely, “I really thought you had been any thing but

that!" Then, drawing his chair again to her side, he added, with his usual inconsiderate frankness, "I wonder Mrs. Usherwood ventures to have such a dangerous person in her house! Ay," added he to himself, "I'd see her hanged before I'd bring such a pretty governess as that among my unmarried daughters. I don't wonder Miss Matilda looks so like a thunder-cloud."

CHAPTER VII.

But anxious cares the pensive nymph oppress,
And hostile passions laboured in her breast.—POPE.

MATILDA was sitting in her mother's dressing-room. She was absolutely crying with vexation.

"I think it's the most cruel and unheard-of piece of unkindness and injustice," she said ; "I think you must have done it on purpose to vex me. But I never was a favourite with you, and that I've known long ago."

"My dear child ! my sweet Matilda !" began the mother, apologising for herself as such mothers nowadays are often obliged to do before such daughters, "I'm sure I am excessively sorry, and all that, and as vexed about it as you can be. It never entered into my head, certainly, that she could come into competition with you, or assuredly I would not have engaged her. But

don't vex yourself, child. We know Mr. O'Hara is very wild and very young; it was the mere fancy of the moment; and if he sees no more of her, depend upon it he'll forget her."

"I'm not so sure of that," put in Lucy; "for Matilda made herself so excessively disagreeable to-night, and looked in such wretched contrast to that pretty Miss Nevil's good-natured, cheerful face, that, if I am not mistaken, she has left an impression behind her which the young gentleman will not easily forget. Why, Colonel Prendergrass himself observed it, and asked what made my sister look so cross."

"You're excessively ill-natured, Lucy, I know of old," was Matilda's answer, "and always find some disagreeable thing or other to say to me. It's all because you have got the voice of a frog, and I can sing pretty well; I know that well enough: but I wish you'd keep to your old Colonel, and not concern yourself with my affairs. One thing, however, mamma, I do hope—that you will put a stop to Miss Nevil's coming down and making her fine appearance in the drawing-room when we have parties, giving herself airs just as if she was one of us; that I do hope you will do."

"Why, you ill-natured, jealous thing!" reiterated Lucy, who certainly took a very spiteful pleasure in vexing her sister. "What! would you have mamma not let her come and play,

when it's plain her playing will be the greatest attraction our drawing-room can possibly have? Colonel Prendergrass, when I told him who she was, said he hoped she would come down and play every evening."

"And nobody's to care for my singing! Very well; I'm sure I don't want to sing: at least, I shall be spared from the trouble of entertaining the company for you all—I always hated it. But I don't think it very kind of mamma, or very wise of you, Lucy; for if Colonel Prendergrass takes to listening to Miss Nevil's playing, he may take to listening to Miss Nevil's fine talking, as Mr. O'Hara does. *He* may draw contrasts between faces as well as other people; and I know who can look ugly as well as ill-natured, which, thank my stars, at *least* I never do. You'll see how you like it then."

"I think, my dears," said Mrs. Usherwood, now assuming her usual important air of decision, "that there is something in what you both of you urge, and so I shall arrange matters with a view to both sides of the question. I shall desire Miss Nevil not to appear with the children for the *present*," said she, with emphasis, looking at Matilda, "unless we just send for her down to play when we happen to want it; and that shall not be oftener than you yourself like, pet," concluded Mrs. Usherwood, patting her daughter's

cheek, who was, indeed, an especial favourite with her, seeing that she was much the best-looking of the whole sisterhood.

“So don’t spoil your pretty mouth with pouting, Matty—it’s not becoming, believe me.”

“I wish she could see herself in the glass, sometimes,” laughed Lucy.

“You’d be glad if you could see what I see, when you look there,” retorted Matilda, recovering her spirits at this arrangement of the matter in question.

It does not seem as if this banishment from the drawing-room would prove any great privation to Angela. Most of us would think she would have preferred the quiet and independence of her own schoolroom, where she reigned almost undisturbed, to this sort of tolerated association with society, wherein she was scarcely allowed to claim a place, and in which she found she was not to expect to take a part.

But it was not altogether so.

A young girl of her age wants recreation and change to preserve her health, both of body and mind. The spirits, as yet unsettled, require to be stimulated by the sense of enjoyment; quiet which is rest to the old, is wearisomeness to the young.

A proper, wholesome proportion of pleasure, if it can be got, ought to be procured for them ; but change of ideas in any case.

After the long, wearisome fatigues of that routine of lessons which she had undertaken, so exhausting to the spirits—after that never-ending repetition of the same sentences—those same rules of grammar—those same chains of verbs—those same dull skeletons of history—crowned by the irritation almost amounting to torture of the musical lessons—for the children, deficient in musical ear as in all other of the finer gifts of nature, were more than usually tiresome to teach,—after the contentions with the pert, malicious Selina—the vain endeavour to stimulate to exertion the stubborn and indolent nature of Elizabeth—the exertion of voice and authority necessary to control the high, undisciplined tempers and rude sports of the three younger, and the care to shield the gentle Theresa from being oppressed by them all—after days thus spent, it was not alone rest for the body which she required, but rest for the spirit: *recreation*—new ideas—change—variety—were indispensable.

She was still so young, that the appetite for new ideas—the desire, the natural craving, for society with those of her age, almost demanded to be satisfied. She had not, she could not possess, that store of thoughts, of experiences, of

reminiscences — she could never have felt that weariness of life which renders solitude so grateful.

These people, in their thoughtless selfishness, were going to deprive her of the only means, scanty and imperfect as they were, of obtaining this refreshment so much needed. And while they are thus employed over Mrs. Usherwood's dressing-room fire, unclasping their gorgeous bracelets, taking the flowers from their hair, and at last, consigning themselves to their maids, are prepared for their luxurious beds, what is she engaged in upon her hard, narrow, uncomfortable little pallet? she whose happiness or comfort never occupies one of their thoughts?

She had just been kneeling down, and commending her inmost heart to God, thanking Him for the home He had afforded in her need, and for the happy evening she had spent: for, after all, it *had* been a happy evening.

The animation of the scene; the pleasure of playing, for the first time in her life, upon a very fine pianoforte; the general admiration which her playing had excited; the sympathy and good will with which she felt herself regarded by the company, even the good-natured flattery of the pretty young lieutenant himself; and above all, the happiness of having made acquaintance

with Miss Grant, filled her with gratitude and self-congratulation.

That Miss Matilda looked cross, she had observed, but she did not care very much about that.

After offering in all humility of heart her grateful tribute, she had laid her head upon her pillow ; but she did not feel inclined to sleep : so there she lay, engaged in reviewing her position, and reflecting upon its duties.

The most earnest, the most sincere, the most truthful desire to discharge those duties well, was uppermost in her mind ; almost terrified at the task before her, for which her youth and inexperience seemed to render her so unfit. With girls but a few years younger than herself placed under her control—girls, as one day's experience had sufficed to shew, requiring the most determined and judicious hand to counteract the evil dispositions which had already acquired such a sad ascendancy ; with little children so rude, violent, and spoiled, to keep in order, and one poor little delicate being to protect—to mend their hearts, improve their manners, and teach them the multitude of things there were to be learned ; what a task before her !

How should she ever accomplish it ? How perform it well ?

There she lay—yet rather stimulated than

discouraged by the difficulty of her undertaking — not desponding, but reflecting — laying out plans, considering of methods, and arranging proceedings; never once thinking of herself, of her own happiness, or her own interests. It was two o'clock before she fell asleep, and she must be down in the schoolroom at six. The under-housemaid had promised to call her at a quarter past five.

Oh how sleepy she was when the housemaid came!

Sleepy as a little child.

CHAPTER VIII.

With success
Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content.

WORDSWORTH.

A QUARTER past five upon a rainy October morning, and the candle lighted by the maid flaring upon her tiny table, and she rubbing her eyes, and combating with delicious, overwhelming, irresistible Sleep, and thinking she is at home at the farmhouse, and that the wind is roaring among the walnut-trees; and then she drops down upon her pillow again, and dreams of Margaret; and then she suddenly starts up, and remembers that she is no longer her own mistress, and has promised to be down for the music lesson.

She dresses as fast as she can, but so confused, so dizzy with sleep, she scarcely knows what she is about. The under-housemaid comes in again, cross at having to mount so many stairs

from her business of cleaning the back-hall, and fastens her dress ; and then, as the clock strikes six, she enters the schoolroom, where, however, a fire is lighted, at which Selina presently joins her.

Orders had been issued by Mrs. Usherwood that Selina should be down for the music lesson one half hour before the usual time ; and that this half hour of early rising should be taken by the six children in turns, so that every one would have to make the disagreeable exertion once a-week. Consequently some maid or other must be up half an hour earlier than had been the custom, every day but Sunday ; so that there was a very large portion of ill-humour diffused among all the children and all their maids.

Every one was vexed at Angela as the innocent cause. Poor Angela ! nobody recollected that she alone was to make this exertion every day.

Servants know every thing. How it is, or whence it is, or by what means, it is vain for those not initiated in this domestic freemasonry to conjecture. But the fact is unquestionable.

And the servants at Mrs. Usherwood's knew as exactly the terms upon which the new governess had been engaged, and were as well aware of the poverty which had obliged her to accept the con-

dition of this additional half-hour's toil as that lady could be herself.

And if that lady held her twice as cheap for her poverty, you may be sure the servants held her five times, and even ten times, as cheap. Servants, as I have often remarked, take the tone of the families to which they belong in a wonderful degree; and the servants of this family exaggerated upon the base ideas of their superiors as regarded the *merits* of wealth.

They despised the poor officer's daughter for her poverty; and, according to their notions of such things, hated her still more for undertaking to do for her salary what had never been done in that house before. And all, as they reasoned, at their expense, as they had, one or other of them, to get up like slaves half an hour earlier every morning—because of *her* bargain.

So a general ill will was excited against the poor young creature, which shewed itself by a more than usual proportion being displayed of that negligent insolence with which servants, if not closely looked after, are apt to treat governesses.

Selina came down pouting and looking dark as midnight—at once angry and rebellious. It was a chilly morning certainly, and her hands were red with the cold; and her maid had done nothing but abuse Miss Nevil all the time she

had been dressing her. So Selina came in with a resolution to be as tiresome as she possibly could.

“And give her enough of teaching *her* music,” as she said.

“Selina,” said Angela, as she opened the door, looking at the clock upon the chimneypiece, “you are ten minutes behind your time. I am afraid your mamma would not be pleased; she makes so great a point of our being punctual.”

To this Selina condescended to make no answer, but walking up to the fire began, while looking very cross, to warm and rub her red hands.

This was allowed for some time, at last Angela said,—

“Come, my dear, this must not go on any longer; cold or warm, we must go to business.”

“I can’t play with my hands frozen to death, and I won’t!” answered Selina. “I can’t think why you pretended to teach us music. I like Monsieur Delaure very much, and I’m sure I shall never learn any thing from you; for I am resolved never to try, and that’s the truth.”

“Then,” said Angela, turning from the piano-forte, where she had been arranging her music-books, “I must appeal to Mrs. Usherwood.”

“Oh, yes!” said Selina, “you’ll begin to tell tales of me, I dare say; and then mamma ’ll

be so angry. She can be terrible when she's angry."

"I shall tell no tales, as you call it—it is not my way, unless your disobedience to your mother's commands and to my orders make it necessary. But we had better understand each other at once, Selina. I am here to do my duty, and I am accustomed to do my duty. I look very young, I dare say, to you; and you, perhaps, imagine that you will be more than a match for me: you will not find it so. Go to your pianoforte at once, and let me have no more trouble upon the subject."

She who had confronted a wild and powerful animal in his fury was not of the stuff to give way before an insolent girl.

She stood there in attitude so firm—her bright, clear eye, bent upon the face of the young rebel before her with such an air of determination, that Selina felt herself subdued. She had never been treated in this way before; she felt she knew not how—abashed and vanquished.

And she sat down to her pianoforte.

"If you knew," said Angela, as she placed herself by her side, "how much pain you would spare yourself and me, if you would assist instead of counteracting me in my effort to discharge my duty, I think you would do it."

This word "duty," this sort of invincible necessity, implied in the way Angela uttered it, was as a new idea to Selina. She was a very clever and intelligent, and not really a bad-hearted girl, though so sadly ruined by evil education and associations.

There was something in Angela she could not help liking after all.

So she began to play.

But, oh! what a wearisome thing was the lesson!

Every thing required attention. The method of holding the hands—the method of reading every note; it was all wrong, and demanded correction in a way which none but those accustomed to musical tuition can easily comprehend, but which no one possessing the least pretence to musical taste could overlook.

Selina's temper in a very short time gave way.

Every remark was contradicted, every direction questioned.

Mr. Delaure, she was certain, taught her so. Mr. Delaure never found fault with her. When, in truth, Mr. Delaure had long given the case up in despair; and, disgusted with the young lady's temper, and with her total want of a musical ear, had, in no very well-principled manner, taken his guinea, and suffered her to follow her own course pretty much as she pleased.

“You are my pupil now, and not Mr. Delaure’s, Selina. Attend to what I say.”

“As if you should know better than Mr. Delaure !” And then playing the disputed passage in a manner directly in contradiction to Miss Nevil’s directions.

“Oh, well !” said Angela, rising from her seat, “I see you are determined to quarrel, and the sooner it comes to an issue the better. I command you to play that passage in the way I have directed ; and if you refuse, there is an end of the lesson, and I shall at once carry my complaints to Mrs. Usherwood.”

But Selina sat pouting before the pianoforte, and her fingers refused to move.

“Very well,” said the young governess, rising with as much calmness in her manner as she could possibly command ; but, after all, with her pulse beating, her lips quivering, and her own young temper, like that of a high-spirited young steed, standing greatly in need of the reins, and feeling, as the most experienced must do with children such as these, terribly at fault ; “I must apply then to Mrs. Usherwood.” “But what if Mrs. Usherwood should not support my authority ?” thought she : “what am I to do ?”

“ Well, I am sure, my dear Miss Nevil, I can’t pretend to enter into the merits and demerits of the case ; and I really am too much occupied and engaged to be able to put on my robes and take the bench, and judge between you and a set of naughty children. Really you ought to be able to manage them yourself ! ”

“ Then I am to consider myself in future as at liberty to enforce discipline by what means I may think necessary ? ” said Angela.

“ To be sure you are ; only, pray let me hear no more about it. You engaged to teach the children music, I believe, and you play very well yourself ; so, pray let me have no more trouble upon the subject. ”

“ Then Miss Selina will not come down into the drawing-room to-night ? ”

“ Nay, positively, I cannot consent to that. I like to see Selina in the drawing-room, and so does her papa. She’s so droll and entertaining when she likes it. I wish you would think of any other punishment. ”

“ I can think of none that would be so effectual. ”

“ Well, I am in haste now, ” said Mrs. Usherwood, who was just going out shopping : “ settle it as you please ; only I am sure you must let Selina come down into the drawing-room, for her papa will miss her so much. ”

Tedious, and to me disgusting, it would be to tell the daily schoolroom battles that took place.

She was almost in despair. Her spirits and strength began already to fail with her unceasing efforts; and yet there seemed no progress made.

She reproached herself. "So short a time," said she, "and already to feel discouraged, and to find the task too hard for me! Ah, my little ones!"

She felt the absolute necessity for perseverance. And yet confined to her schoolroom—very seldom invited down to make one in the drawing-room—the weather rainy and bad, so as to render exercise out of doors difficult to obtain; and, when obtained, affording little or no enjoyment,—some change she perceived was absolutely necessary.

Were it but for a few hours, some refreshment she must have.

She had expected every day that the family would remove to their town-house; and, anxious to avoid expense, and indeed not to break, even by a day's absence, upon her schoolroom routine until habit had confirmed her authority, she had not yet asked to visit the children.

She heard of them frequently from Nurse and Mrs. Levet; all was going on well—there was no necessity for her going there.

But all at once this longing, this necessity for

a little change, came over her. She would go and see them.

She had stipulated, as a condition, to be allowed to do so now and then. She had now been five weeks in the house—they seemed to her five ages. She would summon courage, and ask leave to go to-day.

Mrs. Usherwood appeared very much surprised, and not a little annoyed, at what she seemed to regard as the great presumption of the request; but when she turned to Angela, she saw her looking so jaded and pale, that she thought it best to accede to her wishes.

“I hope she’s not going to be sickly, like Miss Freeman,” thought she; “for she’s really a treasure.”

“But how do you mean to go, Miss Nevil? In the Wimbledon omnibus?”

“I suppose so; but I must first write to Mrs. Levett, and ask her to meet me: for I do not know my way in the least about town.”

“Very improper indeed, then,” said Mrs. Usherwood, coldly, at this, “for you to go to town by yourself! You don’t know what you might get into. No,” added Mrs. Usherwood, partly because she really was anxious, partly because she hated her governesses to have holidays; “if that be the case I must retract my permission: you must have patience till we all go to town,

which we shall do in ten days, and then Mrs. Levet can come and fetch you."

Angela sighed and retired.

She felt so wearied, so sick, so spiritless, that afternoon.

It had been such a worrying morning — a morning of almost uninterrupted contention with these ill-behaved and unmanageable children; they seemed to be worse than ever that day. How *should* she be able to persevere?

The schoolroom was now empty, for the children were all gone out, having been allowed, as a very rare indulgence, to make some little excursion with one of their eldest sisters; and she was sitting in her deserted schoolroom, enjoying, at least, the luxury of a moment's quiet: but her nerves were shaken and enfeebled, her head was aching, and her pulse fluttering; even the reaction was almost painful.

The dread that she should never, never find strength of body for her task, haunted her.

Was this the life, then, of a governess? The only life in her power to choose? The only means possible by which she could earn her bread? Oh, Carteret! Carteret!

Had he deserted her? or had she lost him?

That question would still perpetually recur.

Should she ever, ever see him more? Was that fond desire she had once indulged of his

connexion with Tom Levet a mysterious intimation of truth?—or were the conclusions at which she had once arrived but too just, and he was gone for ever? In either case he must, she began to think, be equally lost to her; for if living, even *her* faith in his constancy must yield to the conviction, from his long, unaccountable silence.

But she had little time now to dwell upon such thoughts; the cares, and troubles, and fatigues of the day were too pressing: yet still, at times, her thoughts would revert to other days, and sadly and mournfully contrast that tranquil life of the farmhouse with her kind and gentle Margaret, and the brief but exquisite few weeks passed with Carteret, and her present irksome condition.

And she sat at this moment lost in sorrowful recollections, with her head leaning on her hand, her eyes vacantly gazing upon a few chestnut-trees which grew near the window, looking, poor thing, very desolate and sorrowful, when there was a knock at the door.

“May I come in?” and the door opened, and Miss Grant entered. “I have been a very long time, Miss Nevil,” she said, coming up and offering her hand, remarking at the same time to herself, with much compassion, the great change which had already taken place for the worse in the young girl’s appearance,—“I have been a

very long time in profiting by your permission to visit you here ; but business obliged me to return home suddenly, and I have been detained much longer than I expected : I only came back to Mrs. Vining's yesterday. How are the children ? All well ? And Theresa ? And yourself ?" Looking very kindly at her. " You don't look quite so blooming as you did in the drawing-room the evening I first saw you."

Angela smiled. It was a smile of sadness, yet not of complaint. She only said,—

" I think I am not quite well to-day. Will you not sit down, Miss Grant, in my little castle ? I am so glad to see somebody," said she, ingenuously.

" I am very glad you like to see me at least," was Joan's reply. " But as to seeing somebody, as far as I am acquainted with the ways of Mr. Usherwood's family, there is scarcely a day passes without there being somebody to be seen. But I do not wonder your appearance in the drawing-room does not give you much pleasure."

" The drawing-room ! I have only been down there three times. I suppose it is not the custom. The young ladies—that is, Selina and Elizabeth—have gone down without me. Theresa has stayed to keep me company."

" Why, you do not mean to say you have had no society but that of your own thoughts and of

those troublesome children all this time?" said Joan, with astonishment.

Angela shook her head, but said nothing.

"No wonder you look pale and wearied; the merely living so entirely to yourself must be enough to produce that effect. But where are the children now?"

"They are gone out upon a visit to Mrs. Sutherland's."

"Then let me take you out for a little air with me. It is quite fine—almost warm—to-day. My open carriage is at the door. We will have a drive round the Common. You have never once been upon the Common since you came here, I dare say."

"But what will Mrs. Usherwood say?" hesitated Angela, whose cheek already was kindling and eye brightening at the thought of this little excursion.

"Oh, leave that to me; I will settle it with Mrs. Usherwood. I should like so much to take you out, if you would like to come."

"And I should *so* like to come."

They had gone some way.

The air was fresh and delightful; and Angela enjoyed this pleasure with a relish which privation alone can give.

Miss Grant had been talking to her in a manner that had quite won her heart and confidence. Indeed, these two characters seemed to run together with that sort of natural sympathy which is in friendship—what love at first sight is in love.

For the oppressed, the suffering, the weak, and the wanting, we know Joan had a natural kindness; and she was charmed by Angela's countenance and manners. Besides, she had never quite conquered her *penchant* for the beautiful, poor Joan!

"I have not been very happy myself," she said, in reply to a remark of Angela's, "so it would be unpardonable in me not to feel for the unhappy. And I have had to struggle so long with my own inclinations, and have found it so very difficult to find contentment in the way marked out to me, instead of in the way I would have chosen, that I can feel most truly for those who are engaged in a struggle like my own. But yours has been a much harder fate than mine. Yet," and she took her hand, "be of good courage; it is astonishing what strength is given to those who ask it where they ought; and what comforts and compensations attend upon the severest trials. I hope to be some comfort to you in yours; for if you want a friend, you have found one in me."

And so she proved.

While staying at Mrs. Vining's, she visited Mrs. Usherwood's schoolroom many times a-week. She took her young friend out for air and exercise; she supported her spirits by her fluent conversation, and soothed and strengthened her mind by sympathy and encouragement.

But after all, members of separate families, engaged in different occupations, Miss Grant's time almost completely absorbed by various claims of duty and business, Angela was still left too much to herself.

She, however, managed to sustain the part she had undertaken with this assistance.

Soon after this, Mr. Usherwood's family adjourned to town, and settled in Lowndes Square.

CHAPTER IX.

“Hence let me haste into the midwood shade,
And on the dark green grass, beside the brink
Of haunted stream . . . lie at large,
And sing the glories of the circling year.”

THOMSON.

WE will leave Angela in Lowndes Square for the present, passing her time in a close and small schoolroom which looks out upon a little square court, if court be the name for leads about twenty feet each way, and surrounded by the walls belonging to the back of the lofty houses which encompass it on all sides.

We will leave her still persevering and indefatigable, battling with her own weariness, subduing her own irritation and impatience, endeavouring to guide these intractable spirits committed to her care in the way they should go, and maintaining, young as she was, the fight against evil with undaunted courage.

I must forsake her for the present, because I

want to introduce you to some new characters with whom it is necessary you should become acquainted ; though I cannot hope, and, in truth, hardly desire, that they should interest you so much as those you are going, for the present, to leave.

Fasten on, therefore, the wings of Icarus if you please, and fly with me over land and sea, for I am about to carry you over the far-stretching hills and fair valleys of France, across the blue Mediterranean, and to plant you finally upon the shores of Sicily—at Palermo in fact, and to introduce you to Mr. Thomas Levet's master.

He is, according to an old custom of his, idling away life and wasting the inestimable treasure, time, under the sun of Sicily, and amid the beautiful mountains which skirt the Bay of Palermo, just as had been his custom to idle away his time in England.

His pencil was his principal occupation, varied at intervals by the old habit of desultory reading, and writing snatches of very good poetry. Desultory reading is far better than no reading at all, certainly, but it is the first recipe in the world for cheating conscience and soothing indolence by the pretence of employment.

He loved to lie in some nook of those lovely hills which commanded a view of the rich and beautiful plain of the Conca d'Oro, in which the

loveliest of European cities stands. Sometimes he would be satisfied with merely gazing upon the magnificent features of this incomparable bay, and watching the light feluccas as they floated like sea-birds upon the blue waters of the Mediterranean: sometimes he would endeavour to fix the beauteous picture in one of his unrivalled sketches: sometimes to paint it in harmonious words, as the light sails glided away before him, and the snowy sea-birds sported in the bright clear air.

Then, dissatisfied with the vain attempt to give durability to the fleeting beauties of the landscape, he would fling pencils and pen impatiently away, and, thrown listlessly upon the rocks, would lie for hours listening to the low murmur of the waters, the gentle voice of the sea-breeze, or the distant song of the Sicilian fishermen, lost in all those delicious reveries of which he had become more than ever fond.

Those dangerous reveries, those vague dreams of the imagination, which threatened to enfeeble his mind, and render a character formed originally for better and sterner things a mere visionary child of fancy, only calculated for worlds of a very different description from that in which we are destined to exist. This young gentleman who had so many faults, but who was gifted with so many rare and admirable qualities, was no other

person than that very master of Mr. Thomas Levet, whose decision and determination of character had exercised so beneficial an effect upon that gentleman's career.

His name, you must know, was Vavasour, and his father and mother were called Lord and Lady Missenden.

He was, at this time, residing with them at Palermo; but, before this, he had been staying in England. One day, upon his return from a long walk—he was very fond of long walks, be it said—he had received a letter from his mother, acquainting him that his father was considered to be upon his death-bed, and beseeching him to set out and join her without an instant's delay.

This summons had been a source of very great embarrassment to Mr. Vavasour, who had his own particular reasons, at that time, for wishing to remain in England; but it was impossible to hesitate a moment in obeying the urgent injunctions of the letter, and he resolved to set forward that very night, especially as if he did not he should lose the next packet for Naples.

So he ordered his luggage to be packed, and as there was no servant at the place where he then was that he thought it advisable to take with him, he resolved to trust to the chapter of accidents and provide himself in London. Having

given his orders, he locked himself up in his room, where, as his servants imagined, he employed himself in writing, which in fact was the case.

Having finished his letter, and enclosed it in a parcel which contained a good many bank-notes, he let himself out by the window of the room where he sat.

He had just time to hurry to a little obscure village, at no great distance from the house : there he found a messenger to carry his despatch. He told this man that the packet was of the greatest importance, and that he must take great care to deliver it safely, in which case he would be handsomely rewarded ; but that there would be no answer required of any sort.

An hour after this he departed.

The faithless messenger was not proof against the temptation to curiosity thus offered. The packet seemed large ; he contrived to examine it, and was astonished at the sum it contained. The opportunity for appropriating it all, without a chance of discovery, was irresistible ; the man destroyed the letter, pocketed the notes, took his passage upon the top of the next coach to London, and was never more heard of in those parts.

Mr. Vavasour hastened to London too, whence, having secured the services of Mr. Levet, he sailed for Sicily, and arrived, in due time, at

Palermo. Here he found his father still alive, and, as it would appear, slowly recovering, but in that state of health that it was impossible to leave him; and here he remained therefore, very ill at ease, wasting his time dreaming among the rocks, and looking for letters from England every post, which letters never arrived.

Idle as he was, he did not spare pen and paper himself; nor, indolent as he was, did he neglect regularly to walk from his father's palace into the town to post his letters himself; but the oddest thing was that he seemed never satisfied with his direction; the letters were addressed to the same person, but now to one post-town, now to another: it was plain he did not well know what was the proper post-town at which to address his letters. Whether they arrived at their destination at all remains a matter of doubt; some said they did, but were returned unopened by those into whose hands they chanced to fall, because the postage was heavy and the proper direction by which to forward them had been mislaid: let the cause have been what it might, Mr. Vavasour certainly suffered a daily disappointment, and returned from each visit to the post-office with a brow still more and more clouded.

He was kept by the nature of his father's malady, as I have said previously, in that uncomfortable state of suspense which renders it

impossible to take any decisive measure. To leave him and forsake his mother, under the circumstances, was not to be thought of; his father might die any day, or upon any day might rally so far as to be placed on shipboard, in order to return, as he most impatiently desired to do, to his own country. In the mean time, fresh perplexities arose.

You may perhaps remember that Mr. Levet, in his letter to his wife, spoke of his old master, Mr. Darby, as being settled at Palermo with his family. This family consisted of his wife, who was a cousin of Lady Missenden, and his only daughter, the fair Augusta Darby.

With this very Augusta Darby Mr. Vavasour had, in his earlier years, through the management of his mother and Mrs. Darby, got entangled in a sort of understood engagement of marriage.

Lady Missenden and Mrs. Darby were, as I have told you, first cousins, and had, from their children's earliest infancy, formed one of those unwise schemes for their future union which silly and romantic people are so fond of arranging, and which the course of actual life is almost certain to disappoint.

Miss Darby, it seems, was the heiress, independently of her parents, to a very handsome fortune, left to her by a distant connexion of her father's

family, into the enjoyment of which she was to enter so soon as she should come of age; and Lord Missenden's affairs not being in the very best order, it would be a very great object to secure this fortune for the heir of the title.

Mrs. Darby loved her cousin, and, having no son of her own, doated upon Vavasour, who certainly had been a very handsome and engaging child, and was now a very handsome and interesting young man; and she gladly lent herself to Lady Missenden's plans.

Unfortunately, however, the inclinations of the young people did not seem particularly propitious to such schemes. They treated one another with considerable outward indifference, at least. The young man was careless; the young lady, satirical and contemptuous; and she carried the *hauteur* of her manner to such a point that already having made up his mind that he and Augusta Darby were particularly ill-suited to each other, he speedily became persuaded that the young lady was of the same opinion; and, indeed, calculated so securely upon this, as the true state of her feelings, that he never took the trouble to enter into an explanation even with his mother upon the subject, being well content to let this tacit engagement die away of itself.

He was enervated by habits of indolence, you well know; and the idea of entering into a con-

test with his high-spirited and domineering mother upon the subject was quite abhorrent to him. He was much better pleased to let things take their course, and to rely upon Miss Darby's indifference, rather than, by declaring off on his side, offend the young lady's pride and delicacy, and offend every one of their mutual relations besides.

Thus matters had been standing for some time.

But he had reckoned without his host, as the proverb goes.

Miss Augusta Darby was no ordinary girl ; she was a very fine, clever, determined, somewhat wild and somewhat romantic, creature ; and Mr. Vavasour had formed a very erroneous idea both of her character and of her inclinations.

In fact she was not—as he had fancied from her gay and almost audacious flirtations, and from the sentiments which, under the affectation of an abhorrence of cant, she was too fond of professing—the least in the world really inclined to prefer the idle young men of fashion that frequented the house—still less those of the turf, with whom her father was surrounded—to himself—to a young man of so much intellect and refinement as her cousin.

Ill educated she had been, living in the midst of that dangerous and inferior description of

society which a passion for racing draws about a man, and with no guide but a mother, a mere indolent woman of fashion, who left every thing to take its own course ; but, in spite of these disadvantages, Augusta Darby had grown up neither heartless nor unprincipled, nor degraded in her tastes.

She had, however, necessarily suffered much from such an education ; her feelings were undisciplined, her temper high, her manners rough and independent, and her conversation too often of that daring nature which seems to set all principle at defiance.

She unquestionably was, in spite of all these mental defects, gifted by nature with an excellent understanding ; she had much discernment into character ; and she had the greatest possible contempt for these gamblers and horse-jockeys, whether gentle or simple, with whom her father chiefly associated. In comparison with these, she regarded Mr. Vavasour with admiration and esteem, and indeed with still tenderer sentiments, which her high spirit forbade her to avow ; so that, far from cherishing the indifference for which he had given her credit, she looked upon this half-engagement which their parents had formed between them with very great satisfaction ; and considered herself, in spite of her affected indifference, as little less than his wife.

These feelings were not diminished when Mr. Vavasour, very much improved by the two years which had elapsed since they had last met, appeared before her again.

This dashing, high-spirited, very ignorant, rather masculine, and extremely clever girl, found something particularly captivating in the elegant *nonchalance*, the refined expression of countenance, the indifference in general society, yet the conversation—when he would condescend to talk so full of feeling, originality, and poetry—which distinguished Vavasour; and she now, in secret, more than ever rejoiced over the engagement which destined her, one day or other, as she conceived, to be his.

It is true he seemed very unaccountably careless and indifferent, and, if he were to be judged by his manner, particularly insensible to her charms; but then he was so indifferent, and careless, and insensible, about every thing, that she hoped it was only his way. While he, as you have seen, was equally deceived on his side.

High-spirited, accustomed to the most obsequious adulation from the gentlemen who frequented her father's table, having long indulged in that flippant freedom of manner which many girls, brought up as she had been, seem to imagine so charming, she treated Vavasour much as

she treated the rest of the world, and thought to captivate him by a sort of freedom of manner dashed with sarcasms and contradictions, and with an easy, careless, affected sort of indifference which was so successful with others, and which entirely blinded him to the true state of the case. She thought by this style of behaviour to awaken in him those feelings of more peculiar interest which she longed to inspire; for she had been brought up in a wretched school, and among a set where a species of vulgar gallantry was substituted for a more rational behaviour, and where the gentlemen around her were accustomed to manifest an open devotion to her charms, which she wanted the delicacy to perceive ought to have been any thing but flattering. She had not, to tell the truth, been displeased with this sort of coarse incense—this *musk* in manners—until Vavasour appeared; and then she no longer valued it, and only tolerated it as a means of piquing his feelings or angering his self-love.

He, meanwhile, too much absorbed by the busy world within to attend much to the world without, looked merely at the surface of things, and was only the more strengthened in his own view of the subject. He thought it impossible but that a handsome, spirited young lady, who was always abusing and quarrelling with him, and flirting as hard as she could with others,

must secretly hate him ; and as his father's illness, of course, for the present postponed the consideration of such matters, he contented himself, as we have seen, with letting the matter take its own course, without bringing his mother, as unquestionably he ought to have done, to some explanation.

Lady Missenden, all this while, considered the matter as settled and in progress, and, too much occupied with the unremitting attention her husband's situation required to attend to other things, made no inquiries, and took no steps about the matter. Mrs. Darby never took steps about any thing, but suffered the world to fleet by her in its own way ; and Mr. Darby was far too busy, organising some English horse-races at Palermo, to trouble himself about what was going on in his family.

“ How you can lie there for hours and hours, looking neither at the sky, nor at the ocean, nor at the olive-gardens, nor at the vineyards, nor at the fountains, nor at the streams ! I do wonder where that most eccentric spirit of yours can be wandering to, when you creep like some strange, sly animal, into the remotest possible hole — as if you detested the face of man or woman !

—lying there with your eyes half shut, and as if you were insensible to every thing that is going on in this world, except now and then, when you make a great effort and swear at the flies!”

They were both forming part of a large pic-nic party, which had been arranged upon that beautiful amphitheatre of hills which surrounds and commands a view of the richest and most varied plain in the world. The dinner was spread under a group of magnificent plane-trees, by the side of one of those sparkling crystal fountains here so abundant, and whose waters, dancing in ten thousand playful waterfalls, rushed toward to the sea.

She had been the soul of the company, laughing and talking in her usual somewhat loud, but most entertaining manner; and he had slipped away, had thrown himself face downward upon a little green plot covered with beautiful flowers. He was not even, as she supposed, enjoying the scene before him—the towers of the city, resplendent in the sunshine—the transparent waters of the Mediterranean—or the delicious colours of the blended sea and sky, now spread in glorious beauty. No! he had found upon the grass a little purple flower, which had reminded him of one he had once gotten under an English hedge-row in days gone by, and, with his eyes half closed, but fixed upon the grass before him, he

had lost himself in one of those delicious reveries—the food of lovers—and which he, of all lovers in the world, was most calculated to indulge in.

He lifted up his head as she spoke, and looked at her as there she stood, her splendid figure and fine countenance displayed to great advantage by the dress she wore, and by the hat she had on. He thought within himself,—

“I dare say, now, hundreds of men think her very handsome; and so she is: but how completely is all that beauty lost upon me! and how peculiarly loud and disagreeable a voice she has!”

Little did she guess what passed, in the instant, through his mind.

“The flies are very troublesome,” he said. “I can’t think why people must bring one out to be devoured by them. For my part, I would as lief dine with the harpies as have a dinner out of doors amid these infernal insects. But the English have the most stupid ideas of pleasure of any nation in the world!”

“No doubt. I, for one, am not in the least disposed to dispute that proposition; as far, at least, as regards *one* Englishman of my acquaintance,” she answered, sitting down upon a little piece of turf by his side.

You must recollect these two were second cousins, and, having known each other from

childhood, she treated him with a familiarity which, with all her ease of manner, she did not quite adopt to others.

“All I marvel at is,” she went on, “that any thing brings you out here to lie in the sun and serve as food for these said flies, with your eyes half shut, and poring upon a bit of grass—things you might just as well do in your own garden—and all the time this delicious scene, this really lovely landscape, is displayed before you. And it puzzles me no less why any man chooses to come into company at all, in order that he may indulge his sulkiness, and lie apart in a nook by himself. But I dare say you think it very fine and clever to play the *desdechado* in this manner. Some people are so fond of making themselves ridiculous, all the time thinking themselves very grand—by striving to be as unlike other people, and as bearish and unsociable as they can!”

“Striving!” said he; “why, my mother bade me come, didn’t she? And you know how I hate all that flirting, and gossiping, and gormandising, and champagne-drinking, which is going on. I think it’s very hard, when every body pleases themselves, that I may not do the same, and creep into a corner, and enjoy my own thoughts. I trouble nobody, and wish to trouble nobody; I wish they would do the same by me!”

“That’s a hint for me to go away, I suppose?”

“Take it as you like; but, indeed,” said he, rousing himself, and rather shocked at his own rudeness, “I did not mean it so.”

“Then make me some amends,” said she. “Rouse up, sir, and let us hear the sound of your voice; and, if you would condescend so far, let us enjoy this delicious, this exquisite, this enchanting scene together.”

“It is very beautiful!” he said. “I don’t know why I care so little for it. I feel that I like England better—the sweet fields, and hedges, and woods of dear, rural England!”

“You monster!”

“Yes,” said he, “I am a monster, no doubt, quite unlike every body else in the wide world; and you think so, Augusta! I must appear detestable to you; for it is impossible to conceive of two beings so utterly incapable of understanding each other’s thoughts as you and I are. It is impossible to conceive of two people more different.”

“Luckily—I wouldn’t be such a sentimental bear as you are for worlds!”

“That’s just what I am—the most uncivilised brute in the world, I know. But it’s too late to mend; and the worst is, I don’t care to mend: for life is a cheat, and there is nothing in it.”

She looked vexed, an expression of pain came over her face, but she persisted in her bantering manner:—

“Nothing in it because there is nothing in you, I must conclude; for, as for me, I find plenty in it. I have no patience with you, Vava-sour, to lie in such a spot upon such a day, and with—with . . . and say life has nothing in it!”

“I am weary of my existence,” he cried, impatiently; and, rising from the ground, he walked away from her, and she saw him sit down at a considerable distance, with his face turned towards the sea.

“How whimsical, and unkind, and rude he is!” she thought. “But it is plain how it is—he thinks himself so secure of me, that he is beginning to give me a specimen of the negligent husband already: but I must try to teach him that things are not altogether come to that point yet—I must try to make him a little less confident.”

And so she did try to pique him by the display of her indifference to him, and contrast it with the favour she shewed to others; but the more she tried to vex him, the better pleased he certainly seemed to be. Her rude speeches and capricious avoidance of him were sure to put him into good humour: he never was so much himself, so inclined to be agreeable, his conversation was never so captivating, or his manner so in-

teresting, as when poor Augusta was making a perfect martyr of herself with her endeavours to tease and disoblige him.

Nobody observed what was going on, or that the poor girl was getting more and more in love with this cruel indifferent. Every day his intellectual cultivation, his gentle and polished manners, his high principles, his delicate sense of honour, and refined taste, only approved themselves more and more to her, in contrast with the very inferior society with which she usually associated.

But, as her passion increased, most unfortunately her defects seemed to increase with it: she did not become subdued and gentle; she was neither softened nor improved by its influence; her pride took alarm, her temper often failed her.

She became more sarcastic and contemptuous in her manner, as he, absorbed, as it would seem, in his own reflections, became more distant and concentrated in himself.

And thus things went on between them, while Lord Missenden kept hesitating upon the confines of life or death; Lady Missenden was absorbed in her attentions to his comfort, or the regulation of his affairs; Mrs. Darby reclined on a sofa, complaining of the heat; and Mr. Darby looked after his English horse-races.

It was necessary to introduce these people to you, which being done, we will for the present bid them adieu, and, by your leave, return to England.

CHAPTER X.

Account him thy real friend that desires thy good rather than thy *good will*.—FULLER.

It is now the early spring time, and people are beginning to come into London.

The family of the Usherwoods is in Lowndes Square, and all the bustle of the London season will soon begin.

There are parties already to be attended every night; the ladies' maids are beginning to work at alterations of dresses without remission. The elder young ladies have commenced that unbroken round of dissipation which renders them more irritable in their tempers, and more insatiable in their demands upon the spirits and time of others, than ever.

Mrs. Usherwood, engaged in the fatiguing business of chaperoning her daughters every

night, and sleeping off the fatigues of the evening by lying in bed till twelve o'clock each morning, has no time or thoughts to devote to other things.

Angela, shut up in her hot schoolroom, labours away, her days unbroken by any refreshing change. Even those visits to her little charges, which she had hoped to make so frequent, are nearly altogether put a stop to.

Young and beautiful as she is, she cannot walk the streets alone; and, weak and delicate as she is becoming, the fatigue of even a walk of that length is too much for her, and incapacitates her during the whole day for her tasks.

It is many weeks since she has found it possible to visit them; but at length the month of April arrives, and with it comes Miss Grant up from Widdrington to cheer with her kindness, and assist with her abundant means, the sick and the sorrowful, the prisoner and the stranger.

She was not long before she found time to visit our poor prisoner in her schoolroom, and she was shocked to see how thin and delicate she was looking.

After a little conversation, she discovered how impossible Angela had found it to enjoy the least liberty of action, and how anxiously she desired to see her children, whom she had not visited for so long a time.

To learn this, and to propose to take her to — Street immediately in her carriage, then standing at the door, was as one thing.

Angela made no hesitation in accepting the offer, and immediately prepared herself to set out upon an excursion which made her better acquainted with her companion in one morning than all the short interviews at Wimbledon had enabled her to be.

The carriage had to pass through that wretched and seemingly interminable labyrinth of streets which are to be found in various quarters of this huge city, and in none more so than in that quarter of the town they had to pass through. Streets where the physical light is obscured, but where, alas! the moral light is more completely darkened; where every object speaks of degradation and vice—and of misery, the offspring of degradation and vice—where the face of man, formed to reflect the divine image, seems degenerating into the brute; and worse, from the brute into the demon—darkened by crime, grovelling in indolence and dirt; sunk in low, sensual, animal pleasures; shut out, as it were, from all that is genial and pure, and delighting in corruption and wickedness.

The conversation had for some time ceased, for Miss Grant, sitting a little forward, her eyes fixed upon the side-window of her carriage, was

silent. She seemed engaged in watching intently these scenes of wretchedness as they glided by. Angela could not help being struck with the deeply mournful expression of her face, the almost darkened solemnity which spread over her features, as the carriage proceeded through these streets, too often traversed—when traversed by the happier of mankind they are—with a thoughtless, careless insensibility.

By Angela herself, even, when she had passed through them, they had been regarded rather with terror and disgust than with any other feeling. She had looked at these things through the imagination alone; and it was not till she observed Joan's countenance that she understood what it was to regard them through the *heart*, and as a source of the deepest and most heartfelt pity.

These streets, however, so narrow, with their low, miserable houses, windows darkened with mud and dust, paper-patched, rag-stuffed panes, and their profusion of squalid, ragged, reckless, and degraded inhabitants, terminated at length in one of somewhat better appearance; but as a brighter light penetrated it, as the pleasant blue sky might be seen overhead, as the fresher and purer air blew into the carriage, and every thing to her began to assume a pleasanter aspect, she observed an expression of acute pain pass over Joan's face.

She looked round to discover what had occasioned it.

The first object which presented itself in this row of larger and better houses, where life seemed to be relieved from some of its oppression, and to assume a better and happier aspect, was a magnificent—Gin-shop.

There it stood in all its captivating splendour—true image of Sin.

Sin—which the great moral poet has painted, with face of beauty to entice, and form of yelling hell-hounds to devour!

Sin—clothed in the royalties of gold and purple!

Sin—whose outside is enticing as the apple of Sodom, and within all ashes and bitterness!

There was a string of carts which, just at this juncture, impeded the way, and the carriage was obliged to stop just in front of this gorgeous receptacle of death and crime.

There it stood, amid the plain, dark brick dwellings that surrounded it, resplendent in the sunshine, with its gilded and blue pillars, its large, bright windows, its tempting painted barrels and vases fraught with deadly poison for body and soul alike, all glittering in the morning light, clear, airy, pleasant, and fresh—displaying its temptations in the most seducing forms, and contrasting by its gay appearance, its apparent

order, wealth, and comfort, with the dull and sordid air of every thing around it.

But who are those creeping in and out?—what wretched, pallid, dingy, shaking forms are those?—whose are those shrivelled features, those blood-shot eyes, those trembling limbs?—whose that air of depravity and misery?—Men, women, children—all—all! Are these the frequenters of this pleasant, lightsome place?

And, behold! within there are men of regular lives—we cannot call them *good* men—and young, respectable women—church-goers—chapel-goers—creatures from the innocent country abodes, daughters of respectable farmers and shop-keepers; there they are, standing attentive to business, serving out the liquid fire—the hell-fire—to their wretched and deluded fellow-creatures!

As the carriage halted, the dark, expressive eyes of Joan, with a sort of deprecating horror, were travelling over the front of this handsome building. And she shuddered as she gazed at this habitation of woe.

Ah lascia ogni speranza voi ch' entrate!

But now the carriage moved slowly forwards, and, with a deep sigh, she turned her head away.

“What is that place,” said Angela, “which looks so bright and gay in the midst of the general ugliness of this street? and what miserable-looking people are going in and out of it! In comparison with every thing around it, it looks quite a palace!”

“Don’t you know?—yes; it is called a gin palace!”

“A *gin* palace! What a name!”

“That’s the name which people in their carelessness—fools who make a mock at sin, I am almost tempted to say—give it, in their idle, joking way.”

“You seemed to look at it with horror.”

“My dear Angela, if this fair covering of the earth’s bosom were to be removed, and we were able to see the boiling, surging sea of fire upon which wise men say we are resting, do you think the very hair of our heads would not rise with horror? Something like this I feel at the contemplation of these sights. No,” she said, as if speaking to herself, “I never *can* get accustomed to them. Nay, God forbid I ever should.”

“I can bear to think of the sorrow, and the privation, and the sufferings of the unfortunates of this world,” she went on; “for is not God with the mourner, to wipe all tears from all faces? but this! this utter, this unutterable darkness—this absence from His holy presence—these

wretched, lost, miserable, unannealed sinners! Oh . . . !”

And covering her face with her hands, she uttered a stifled groan, like one endeavouring to suppress the expression of intense pain.

Angela slightly trembled, and looked extremely grave.

She had been ever generous, kind, and compassionate; but the state of so many of her fellow-creatures, perishing in vice and misery, had never been called to her attention in this way before.

She felt almost bewildered with the new thoughts which now crowded rapidly upon her mind, and ashamed and humbled at remarking how little she had till now thought upon the subject.

“ They take pains to make them happier; but who will make them *good*?” said Joan, as she sank backwards in the carriage, in a tone of despondency. “ How shall we make them *good*? O Thou, the Lord and Master of these poor misguided creatures,” she murmured to herself, “ shine upon them with thy holy light! Carry thy purifying Spirit into these dark abodes of sin and death, and call forth a new creation!” Then turning to Angela, and relapsing into the tone of more ordinary conversation, yet with her large dark eyes, not tearful, but still full of a feeling

too big for tears, she said, almost as if talking to herself,—

“ This subject is so perplexed with contradictions! Great efforts are undoubtedly being made by a righteous government, and greater still by the almost innumerable saints and worthies of this dear, dear England, in the cause. How many are daily striving, and have striven, to arrest this tide of evil, and yet how little has yet been done, or rather how much, how very much, remains undone! Nay, in some respects, things, I fear, are worse than they have been; and if much light has been diffused, many lights have gone out.

“ It seems to me (the impression is strong with me), that in some things wrong principles have been adopted. They talk to these poor creatures of liberty, who are perishing for want of discipline—and enlarge upon the neglect of duties in those above them, till they teach them to forget they have duties of their own to perform. Is it not the summit of human virtue—the most difficult trial to which human virtue can be exposed, to resist temptation and act well, when released from the pressure of those external circumstances which, as it were, *force* so many men to be prudent and orderly in spite of themselves? and can it be right to expose these poor ignorant creatures to that most trying of temptations, by allowing them, nay, almost inviting them, to cast

the burden of their own responsibility upon others, by this unvarying habit in writers with the best intentions of attributing their sins to any cause rather than their own weakness and folly; and when vice, and sloth, and intemperance, have exhausted their resources, inciting them to claim as a *right* from their fellows the means of subsistence they have so inexcusably flung away? Alas! of such false teaching what can come? But what, in fact, does come? — Self-delusion, temptation irresistible; while all the excitements to wholesome toil, self-government, self-denial, which are the life of the soul, are done away.

“Poverty is no crime. Have we not rather reason to thank God in this our day, and say, extreme poverty is almost always the result of crime? The time has been when the crime *was* that of others,—in this our day it is their own.”

“That sounds almost harsh to me,” said Angela, “who have known so much poverty, and experienced its sufferings, and seen those I loved suffering from it too, and still see them. My poor little brothers and sister! Poverty seems to me indeed no crime, but deeply, deeply to be pitied. What would have become of us if nobody had pitied us?”

And she looked up at Miss Grant’s face, grateful, yet in doubt.

“I am speaking of classes, not of individuals,

my dear. God knows there are poor shipwrecked mariners enough upon this stormy sea, who are the true objects of Christian love and pity. So are they all, indeed, the masses, objects of love and pity; but Christian charity *can* not, and therefore *ought* not, to attempt to maintain them all—to maintain a whole class. Each man must and ought to sustain himself; and by the everlasting *law*, he can have no *right* to demand sustenance from another. The law of charity, the law of love, were made to heal the sufferings which arise from the workings of the irrevocable moral, as well as natural laws; but when the law of love becomes an institution like that of justice, instead of the freewill offering of the heart, it loses its nature, and indeed,” said she with a smile, “I could almost bring myself to say, partakes of the nature, of sin.

“I am losing myself in the subject, dear Angela, which will not interest you, but which, I confess, interests me deeply. Not in order to secure the possessions of the rich, believe me, but to preserve the morality of the poor, are those laws of property, those stern laws of justice, so sacred in my eyes. When once this foundation-stone of right, of individual right to what is a man’s own, of plain unflinching justice between man and man, is shaken, the whole edifice of society trembles; and therefore I think it false as it is

wrong, and wrong as it is false, to talk, as some authoritatively do, of the *right* of the poor to be maintained."

"But where some are so very rich, and others so very poor, does it not seem right that the rich should be *made* to contribute to the poor, if they are too hard-hearted to do it themselves?"

"I don't know—I doubt it very much," was, to the astonishment of Angela, Joan's reply.

She opened her eyes wide with surprise.

She, so good, so generous, so kind, doubt of what seemed such a plain notion of natural justice to her!

"It is not for the sake of property, but for the sake of right," said Joan, as if speaking to herself, "that I am so anxious to maintain this principle." Then turning to Angela, "What is that you propose to do?" said she. "Is it not merely taking what is one man's, because another man happens to want it?"

"But the man you take it from does not want it," said Angela. "I am thinking of superfluous wealth."

"Who shall measure the superfluous? My dear," she said gravely, "time was when I thought as you do; but my views have altered. I think I see now, that the law which preserves his thousands of acres to the rich man is the same which secures his little garden and his

crust of bread to the poor. But in these things there can be no degrees, for the rule must be made absolute, or it is no rule at all. Where shall we begin, or where shall we stop? The limits of every man's acquisition must be his powers of acquisition, be they personal or accidental. All the law can do, or ought to do, is to prevent unjust acquisition. And what do we mean by *unjust* acquisition? It is not to be measured by its extent, but by its principle. Unjust acquisition is to take what is not your own; and who does that more than one of these poor gin-drinkers, who has sold his morsel of bread to buy his own destruction, and then thinks another ought to be *forced* to replace it?"

"Then you would have no poor-laws? Good heavens! what would become of the poor?"

"Not exactly that—the rich, who make the poor-laws, have the right to tax themselves to provide for the poor; but this constitutes no claim, no indefeasible claim, upon the part of the poor. It is given them as an act of common charity, not as the discharge of rigid justice."*

She seemed as if she were about to say more upon this subject, which, indeed, very much occu-

* Justice founds its claims on rights, charity on wants. The individual should be charitable, the community should be *just*; and this principle, I believe, can never be forgotten without the greatest real injustice.

pied her thoughts, but she stopped, for the carriage had arrived at its destination, and stood before the door of Mrs. Levet.

“ You will think my opinions very harsh and hardhearted, I fear,” said Joan, before the man opened the door. “ I do not well know why I talked of them to you. They require much explanation to be properly understood, and therefore I seldom enter into conversations of this nature. And you, my dear Angela, at present have quite enough to do with matters nearer home. Only promise not to think me dreadfully hard-hearted.”

“ I am not very likely to do that,” said Angela, looking up gratefully in her face.

CHAPTER XI.

Yet I've one plank, and that shall *never* leave me.

THE children sprang with a shout of rapture to her arms.

"Angy, Angy! Come again, dear Angy!" covering her cheeks, her gown, her hands, with kisses; the little boy standing looking at her—the little girl hiding her face, and the tears of joy that rolled down her cheeks against her dress.

"Angy! dear, dear, pretty Angy!"

But baby turned away his head.

"Baby not know its Angy! And, dear Nurse! you look pale and ill, Nurse. And my little ones! Lucy, my darling, how pale you look! Little Tommy, what have you done with your red cheeks? Baby, baby! angel baby! He looks

not well, Nurse!" Joan stood unobserved by the window, watching this scene.

This young girl of nineteen—this little mother with her children crowding round her, looking first at one, then at the other, with such tender motherly affection and care!

But Joan's countenance was not full of grief and pity at this spectacle, as at that of the gin-palace. No, here was poverty, here was privation, but here was not sin; and her eyes, as she looked on them, were beaming with joy.

She did so adore what was noble, right, and true; the beautiful in morals, that was the passion of her heart.

Angela kept looking at her children anxiously.

"But, dear Nurse, they don't look well—they don't, indeed!"

"Nor you either, for that matter, Miss Angela," said Nurse. "Be quiet, children! how you do pull her about! Madam," turning to Miss Grant, "I beg you pardon—will you not be pleased to take a chair?"

"Thank you, I am very well where I am. Miss Nevil, they are lovely little things; but you will like to stay with them a little, perhaps; and as I have one or two more things to do, I will call for you again in half an hour. Oh! pray don't trouble yourself, Mrs. Nurse, I shall find my way down stairs very well."

She had been at most but five minutes in the room, but her quick discerning eye saw at once how it all was.

“Indeed, Nurse, you none of you look well.”

“How should we, my dear Miss Angela? Only think of it—this street is so close, and there comes up such a smell from it in rainy weather. And then that court behind; it is full of such rough, drunken people, that I never can open *those* windows. The children would see such sights and hear such things. I’m forced to keep the shutters shut most part of the day, for Master Tommy there grows a big boy; and to see boys of his age gambling and fighting, and hear them blaspheming and swearing, cannot be good for him in no way.”

“Poor children! What do you do all day long when you can’t walk out?”

“Oh, we never hardly walk out,” said Tommy. “Nurse says we shall dirt and spoil our things this bad weather.”

“Oh, Nurse, that’s not like you! you used to say air was as necessary as daily bread for young children. Not take them out for fear they should dirt and spoil their clothes!”

“Why, Miss Angela, how like your old self

you *do* talk! Do you think I'd have them get as dirty and shabby as all the little vagabonds in the street? Not I. Those who do not respect themselves, soon learn not to be respectable. I would fain keep my poor master's children a little tidy, Miss Angela; and what's to be done in dirty weather? Their clothes will soon be worn out any how. At home I keep 'em in their brown-holland pinafores, and it saves shoes too; and bless you, my dear angel, where are we to get more when they are gone? The guinea a-week—poor little dears!—why it all goes in food—those children want so much.”

“My poor little ones!” was all she could say, pressing them both to her heart. “But here, Nurse, here is the interest I have just received from the stocks—seven pounds ten. I shall not want it. Stay, I must have a little,—here are six pounds. Now put that by to get them shoes when they want them, and a new jacket and trousers for my tomboy, and a frock for Lucy, when the things they have are worn out. But, for heaven's sake, let them go out every day, good Nurse.”

“And what are you to do yourself for clothes, I wonder? for your gown and bonnet are getting very shabby. The bread earner must be served first, Miss Nevil; it will never do for *you* to

want clothes, I'm sure of that. Better these poor little lambs should want fresh air."

"I shall make these do; but let me look at their things."

The inspection was disheartening; their clothes were beginning, indeed, to wear out—shoes above all. It was evident that Nurse's fears were but too well founded, rags and tatters were at hand.

It is easy in these cases to manage for a little girl, but what is to be done for a boy? The tailor must be called in.

"I do take 'em out when I can, on a Sunday when it's fine," said Nurse; "and we get into that pretty park of St. James's—oh, what a blessing is that park!—to see the children feeding the ducks and swans. Pretty lambs, they always save a bit of their breakfast for that. But it's a long way to go, and so difficult to get through the streets, which are so thronged of a Sunday. I often wonder where in the world the people come from. But Mrs. Levet is good-natured in going with us; I must say that for Sarah, she has been extremely kind to us while you have been away."

"She's not at home just now; I saw only the boy as I came up. I want to thank her."

"No, she has gone down to the Post Office to see if there's a letter. Poor thing! it seems as if she could not wait till the postman comes round.

And it's such a walk, too! And her letter, if there is one, won't be given her. But she's so anxious for a letter, and thinks all sorts of foolish nonsenses when one doesn't come,—that there's one lying at the dead-letter office, wanting a direction, or so on. Well, matrimony is a strange thing! To think of Sarah ever caring so much for that wild fellow of a head-groom of Mr. Darby's!"

Angela's heart too now began again to make itself a voice; she managed in general to keep it tolerably silent, but now it was throbbing and fluttering and asking questions.

"Has Mrs. Levet heard while I have been away?"

"I think she has, ma'am. But here she comes, I hear her voice down below."

And Mrs. Levet was heard ascending the little narrow staircase; and she soon made her appearance after knocking, for she had heard below that Angela was arrived.

"May I come in, Miss Nevil?"

"Oh, Mrs. Levet, I wanted to see you so much, to thank you for all your kindness to these dear children. And how are you?—and how is your husband? and have you heard from him again?"

"Once," said Mrs. Levet, "and he said he thought his master was coming home. There's

talk, it seems, of his marrying a young lady out there: but Tom's close and would not mention her name. Lady Missenden is quite anxious, it seems, about it; but, as far as I can hear, the young master sulks and is quite out of spirits. And the last news was that he was coming to England; but his mother, Lady Missenden, won't hear of it, Tom says. I wish I'd got the letter to shew you, but I lent it to a friend to read, for it's very interesting,—all about those Catholic idolatries, and a great idol they've got there of Saint Rosolin. Tom seems quite charmed with these things, which I am very sorry for; I hope in heaven he won't turn Catholic. I'd ten thousand times rather he was as he is now, which is almost nothing."

"Nay," said Angela, smiling; "don't say so, Mrs. Levet."

But she said no more.

Never was fate so strange as hers, she thought; this total silence—this strange darkness and obscurity. Why, if he were living, did he not write? and why, if he were dead, had she this unaccountable persuasion that he did live, and that he was Tom Levet's master?

"Did you remember, when you wrote, to ask what his master's name was?" said Angela.

"Yes, miss; it's . . . *Vavasour*: at last I have got it."

Angela uttered a faint shriek, and clasped her hands in a sort of spasm.

“What’s the matter, Miss Angela?” cried Nurse, running to her, alarmed at the deathlike paleness of her countenance.

“Why, dear me!” said the old woman, “you were not thinking of Mr. Carteret all this time, when you were so anxious about Tom Levet’s master? Why, his master is the son of a lord, and Mr. Carteret was nothing but a poor vagabond drawing-master. Why, if he was a gentleman, didn’t he come again, after poor misses had asked about him?”

“Oh, he is then dead!” said Angela, covering her face with her hands.

“I don’t believe that one bit neither, miss,” said Nurse; “though I made believe I did, to quiet you at the time: but who ever died in such a sudden way and no inquiry made about him? The people he lodged with would have tracked him, I make no doubt of it; and, besides, he must have left letters or something. He had parents, you know—my misses told me that—and they were abroad; but they’d have routed him out someways. Never think about him more, Miss Angela. I always misdoubted him from the first, but misses and you wouldn’t hear of it. He’s taken himself away, seeing he was about to be

found out. He was a swindler and a pretender, though you couldn't see it. I've heard hundreds of such tales before now."

She still kept her hands over her eyes, shutting out the light, and endeavouring to extract something like expectation from the strange mixture of feelings which this speech excited. That Nurse had never really believed him to be dead, now struck her as a strange confirmation of the feelings which had lately been gaining strength in her mind; but then he was equally lost to her. Why did he not give the least account of himself? The idea of his being a swindler and a pretender, as Nurse called him, was utterly irreconcilable with all she had seen of him. Yet what strange mystery hung around him!

"Surely never was poor heart so distracted as mine!" thought she.

Then the thought struck her, that there might be letters from him lying at the farm; that Mrs. Whitwell might have heard something from him, or of him; or that letters might have been sent to her there, and never forwarded; and she determined to write that very night and inquire.

To do something in such cases is such a relief.

Yet, in spite of this relief, her countenance betrayed so much agitation when Miss Grant returned, that she could not help observing it.

She came up with a basket in each hand ; one filled with nice things for the children to eat, the other with toys.

“ My dear,” she said, “ our time is out, and I must hurry you away, I am afraid. But see, my little loves, I have brought you some pretty things for your sister to give you ; and you’ll be very good till she comes back, won’t you ? She shall soon come again if you will let her go now.”

But they hung about her and would not part with her.

The sight of the toys could not console them for losing their Angy. With much difficulty the parting at last was made, and they were once more in the carriage.

Then Joan took hold of Angela’s hand, and said, very kindly,—

“ Something amiss has happened. Have you heard any bad news ? You look so much hurried. May I ask you, or must I not ask you ?”

But Angela turned away her head a little, and coloured.

“ It is not that I am ashamed,” said Angela, in a low voice, “ but I cannot help colouring. No, I have no wish to keep any thing from *you*, for you are kindness itself ; but, perhaps it is impossible to make another conceive It seems so strange to myself that such strong feelings

almost a stranger—yet, oh, how unlike a stranger !”

Joan only pressed her hand, and said nothing.

“ It must seem so foolish, so weak, so unaccountable to you.”

“ Why to me ?” said Joan, with a sigh which she endeavoured to check. “ Why must it seem so foolish and so unaccountable to *me* ?”

“ I don’t know,” said Angela, playing with the window-tassel of the carriage, and looking away : “ but you seem too sensible—your reason must have had too much strength, ever to be so foolish as I am.”

Joan sighed again.

“ Poor Angela ! is that it ?” she said.

“ It is the strange, mysterious uncertainty,” Angela went on. “ I think I could bear it if I could know the truth—could forget him if unworthy ; and mourn over him with a certain sweetness, even if he were dead : for, oh, he was so truly noble and good ! I think there never was any one so unhappy as I am,” she added, her voice faltering, and the tears beginning to roll down her cheek.

“ Do you think so, dear Angela ? And yet you seem to have no doubt that he loved you.”

“ Oh !” said she, lifting up her eyes, and turn-

ing them full upon her friend, filled with enthusiastic faith and confidence, "I never have, and I never, never will doubt that!"

"Then do not say that never was unhappiness equal to yours," said Joan, in a low voice, and a deep colour mounted slowly into her cheek.

"Have *you* been unhappy, too?" said Angela; and she felt as if she loved her a thousand times more than she had ever done before for the weakness. So true it is,—

"One touch of nature makes all mankind kin."

"Yes," said Joan, "I was once. And," added she, with extreme gentleness, "I am very sorry for you."

"But tell me all about it, Angela," as, recovering herself, she went on,— "I think you will be better for talking of it; for yours is a sorrow of which you *can* speak."

And Joan recollected with a sort of terror those yearnings for confidence, that longing for sympathy, and that deep, ineffaceable sense of shame, which had made her dread even the kind eye of her grandmother. All the intense sufferings of so many years ago, burnt in, as it were, in characters indelible upon her heart, seemed for the moment revived, as if but of yesterday.

"If he loved you, you cannot be very, very unhappy, Angela."

Then Angela blushing, and stammering, and

hesitating, related her little history,—the brief but most sweet romance of her life, and its sudden and awful termination.

“But he is not dead now, I feel sure he is not dead,” she ended by saying. “I once thought he must be. I do not know why I have changed my opinion. Do you believe in presentiments, Miss Grant? I cannot help it. I think he will come again.”

“God grant it!” was all Joan could reply.

She was not sanguine. Her life had been darkened by one deep disappointment. She had learned to expect little from it.

After a severe struggle with herself, when time, that benign and sure physician to the heart's severest wounds, had aided her unremitting efforts to escape despondency and melancholy, she had reviewed her position calmly and wisely; and, a bankrupt in happiness herself, had turned her whole attention, and directed the strong powers of her mind, to the divine mission of universal charity,—to the promotion of the good of others.

Many live this life, it is to be hoped, and more or less find happiness in it; but how wide is the difference between the fate of her who lives surrounded by the objects of tender affection, and finds her devotion repaid by all the joys of the heart, and one left to this solitude of the affections! Yet in that strenuous endeavour after the

promotion of good, that earnest desire to dispense the talents entrusted to her well, Joan had found serenity and peace. Still there were moments, and this had been one, when the wounds of the heart would bleed afresh; and, strange to say, that lot which in patient resignation she had accepted for herself, she felt as if she could not bear the thought of presenting as a compensation to her friend.

That young creature, so animated, so alive to every warm and affectionate feeling, so full of hope, and, in spite of all her misfortunes, to whom life was still so dear—she could not bear to cast over her prospects the sober shade of her own experience; to repeat to one so young and sanguine the stern lesson she had learnt herself.

She could not bear to say to one just opening into life, “This world is nothing; and in a better we must look for the restitution of all things.”

She yearned to see her happy *here* as well.

Many a religious person would have thought this a want of faith upon her part, but she had shewn in the victory over her own disappointment the force of a faith triumphant; and, for my part, I love her better for this human weakness—if weakness it were—for not enduring to witness in the case of another those struggles and sufferings which had been so nobly vanquished in her own.

CHAPTER XII.

After all, we are to remember that an incidental alms deserves not much commendation ; it is a regular habit of doing good which shews a true sense of benevolence.

STILLINGFLEET.

“ I AM glad you can hope, dear Angela,” Joan had said. “ Encourage Hope while you can — Hope is so sweet ! Strange things do happen in this world of ours ; we fancy they will never happen to ourselves, but they *do*. I agree with Nurse — the death of any individual, however friendless, never occurs without some stir being made about it. You were two months at the Great Ash Farm after his disappearance. You must have heard something. This young man, by your account, was evidently one that must have been loved and valued, and gently educated ; there was a mother and father ; — he would have been traced, depend upon it.”

They had returned home by New Norfolk

Street, where Miss Grant's town-house was situated; she had business there. They were now sitting in the pleasant bay-window that looked over the Park.

The Park was, however, now but the dull, uninteresting scene which it is early in March; but the air was soft and pleasant, and the window was open.

"You are quite wise to write to Mrs. Whitwell, as you propose; — who knows, but there may be letters? And then, my dear," continued Joan, with extreme kindness, "the declaration of his affection, the ring in pledge which you wear upon your finger, entitles your friends to exert themselves, without indelicacy to you. Much may be done, if we can but trace him; and we will spare no pains to do that."

Oh, if people knew—oh, if they only would accustom themselves to consider, the very great blessing of kindness—of that kindness which really sympathises with what *is*, instead of striving to alter feelings to what they would wish them to be, many of us would be so much kinder than we are.

Joan would have been but too glad could she have obliterated from Angela's mind those traces of the past which interfered with her peace; she would have been so glad to have thought her at peace;—but how vain was the wish! While there was any uncertainty left, the remembrance must be

kept up. The only thing to be done was to help her, if possible, to obtain satisfaction.

The joy that kindled Angela's cheek and shone in her eyes at these last words, gave Joan but a melancholy pleasure.

She was glad to see her look happy; yet so fearful of being only the harbinger of disappointment.

"Ah, my dear, but you must be prepared for disappointment," said she tenderly.

Angela took her hand, and kissed it with a sort of pious reverence.

"I have ever believed that the issues of things are right," she said; "if I had not, what would have become of me?"

It was settled that she should write without the delay of a day, and she sat down to the writing-table for that purpose. During this time Miss Grant, in her own quiet manner, was employed in opening the various letters and papers with which the table was covered. She was looking them over, arranging and noting them, like one accustomed to transact serious business;—not the light engagements of a woman's life, but business with men and with the world.

When Angela had finished her letter, she sat

observing her, and looking round upon the room, which was a sort of type of the mind and habits of her to whom it belonged.

This room, which was not the drawing-room—it being in the floor above—was Miss Grant's own private morning apartment; the room in which the greatest portion of her life, while living in London, was spent; and the arrangement which pervaded it shewed the spirit of industrious and useful occupation which actuated its possessor.

Her very large fortune had constituted her something of a public character; and with the energy and powerful sense of the claims and responsibilities of her position, she—as I have been told is the case with the loftiest lady in the kingdom—laboured, as very few of her inferiors chose to labour, most strenuously and conscientiously in the discharge of them.

Time was with her the invaluable talent, of which she demanded of herself the strictest account, as the only means by which she could possibly be enabled to dispense her other high faculties as she ought to do.

And it was this value attached to *time* which constituted, in the dearth of her affections, her real happiness.

There was no *time* to dwell upon the waste within her breast.

The room was plainly furnished; indeed, the

severe simplicity of Joan's taste might be discerned, not only in this, but in every thing around her. Carriage, dress, apartments, entertainments, —it was all the same; grave, handsome, but plain. No tinsel, no display; and, above all, no wanton extravagance or luxury. There was a good deal of the grandfather in her, as I have observed. She disliked luxury; nay, I believe she thought the indulgence of a taste for luxury wrong.

She disliked extravagance, too, and decidedly thought *that* wrong.

Her establishment was conducted upon the principles which governed her personal habits. A firm and almost severe system; neither idleness, nor waste, nor luxurious indulgences would she allow. Plenty of plain and wholesome food, but not one article of mere luxurious indulgence—no idle imitation of the wasteful systems of others, would she permit.

But while her sway was firm and decided, never was heart more really alive to the true interests of all who depended upon her. All the servants knew that they had a true friend in their mistress; —if her resolution and spirit rendered all unworthy gains and peculations impossible, care was taken to teach and encourage them to the best economy and management of what was righteously their own.

Her servants grew rich without the practice of any one of those mean devices which degrade the class in their own eyes and in those of others.

They all loved her for her kindness, and honoured her for her firmness; and wrong was not attempted, where it was well known it would not for one instant be tolerated. This household was a school of discipline in virtue, and the abode of peace and happiness.

The Englishman (and woman) of the lower classes does not require what is commonly called pleasure; and the attempt to do away with our old Puritan prejudices upon this head, and to awaken the appetite for pleasure by facilitating the means of its enjoyment, which with the best intentions have been attempted, I believe, have in general failed.

Those acquainted in a way my experience has not enabled me to be with what goes on in those singing saloons, or music saloons,—“Devil’s Seminaries,” (as an old Sabbath-school teacher designated them)—which are multiplying in all our large manufacturing towns; those free-and-easy clubs—those parties at taverns—those balls and concerts—fancy balls and masquerades, which at such public-houses are established, and a taste for which seems increasing; will, perhaps, coincide with me in the opinion, that a taste for *pleasure* cannot be safely indulged among our people.

It may, perhaps, be gratified abroad, without injury to the morals of the people — of that I cannot speak; and, certainly, those who have seen the gaily-dressed peasantry of France, young and old, crowding to their little rural fêtes, would be sorry to think evil could lurk under so cheerful and pleasant a disguise.

But how different, in fact, are those things arising from the long-established habits of the people, and carried on in the open air, from the hotbeds of vice which such assemblies prove in our crowded, suffocating cities!

Such excitements are neither wholesome nor necessary. Air and pleasant scenery, social walks of families together — cakes and fruit bought as they go; that grave and temperate enjoyment which rejoices the heart of every well-wisher of his kind who walks our Parks of a Sunday; this is what is best suited to a serious, industrious, and moral people, such as we were constituted to be; and our Puritan ancestors, when they placed the more exciting pleasures under the ban, had a juster insight, I think, into what forms the real happiness of the working classes, than the benevolent romancers of our present day.

Give the people parks; let every great city have its lungs; let the blue arch of heaven bend over, and the eye of God watch the enjoyments of His people; but let us discourage junketting,

feasting, drinking, and making love in *rooms*. Wherever many are gathered together in a room, the air is not more corrupted than the spirit will be.

She had derived it from those who had gone before her—from the stern simplicity of her grandfather, from the grave purity of her grandmother, from the benevolent severity of her minister—this love, this passion for order, for well-directed discipline, for purity, for *good*.

To make them all *good*.

She had been taught to strive for *good*, rather than for happiness, in the faith that the truest *good* is the best happiness.

She strove to carry out this with every one with whom she had to do, to seek their happiness *through* their *good*; and the result, as far as her own household was concerned, was eminently successful.

Those papers which she is looking over with so much interest, what are they?

Temperance papers, and the reports upon the police of gaols, and upon the ragged schools, and of the proceedings of those blessed spirits—angels of light, whatsoever their poor outward seeming may be—who visit the abodes of wretchedness and vice to rescue the fallen and to save the lost.

Had her fortune been three times as large, she would have had more than enough to do with it.

To rescue the fallen, and to save the lost, and to stem the torrent of wickedness?

And how?

By pandering to the passions of these misguided ones, in the name of a benevolent regard for their welfare; as he, *l'ami du peuple*, the arch-fiend Marat, did in his day?—(let our own newspapers beware!)—by flattering their self-love, blinding them to their own heavy faults and moral wants, their sad shortcomings, their ignorance, and their weakness, their profligacy, and their vanity?

No.

But by a frank, true, wholesome, faithful, representation of those truths upon which all society rests.

Such as, that every man in his condition must play his part, and play it well; and that it is not in the power of any society to shelter men from the consequences of their own mistakes.

That England expects *every* man to do his duty.

That God is no respecter of persons, but in every condition he that doeth righteousness is accepted of Him.

To teach them that the best happiness and true prosperity of every one would be found in obedience to the plain, wholesome, almost forgotten doctrine of our inimitable Church Catechism:—

“ Not to covet nor desire other men’s goods ; but to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, and to do my duty in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call me.”

I believe every person who has made it his business to visit and make himself acquainted with the actual state of the poor, will not be surprised to hear that Miss Grant—however unfashionable, old-maid-like, and queer it may make her seem to some of you — was a most strenuous supporter of the Temperance cause. She likewise more particularly interested herself, personally and individually, in the fate of all young women who were dependent upon their own labour for bread.

This very numerous class, whether as governesses, improvers, milliners’ apprentices, shop-girls, or seamstresses ; whether sitting behind stalls selling apples, or making dresses for a court-ball ; had each their claim upon her sympathy and attention. She knew well the difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of raising the wages of industry to a class ; she could only busy herself in removing the obstructions, as far as in her lay, which lie between these and their due reward—that is, the actual *price* value of their labours, a

portion they do not often receive ; in sheltering them from the temptations which so peculiarly beset them ; diminishing the hardships of particular instances, and enabling them to provide for their old age.

A single woman herself, she constituted herself especially the guardian of the single and the unprotected.

The Governess' Institution was one of her especial favourites, and she had constituted several fellowships herself.

I think, after all I have said, I need scarcely return to describe the fittings-up of the pleasant apartment in which they now sit,—its book-shelves upon one side, its office-shelves filled with documents of all descriptions upon the other ; its two or three choice modern pictures, its two or three choice specimens of modern sculpture, its two easy chairs, and its table well stored with writing provision of all sorts.

There were *two* easy chairs, you observe.

And as Angela sat now looking round and taking note of the room, now watching the intelligent and earnest expression of Joan's face as she went through the papers laid there for her inspection, she learned why there were *two* arm-chairs, and why one was most peculiarly comfortable-looking.

One yet remained most valued and most dear,

whose presence and whose affection had cheered, whose advice had guided, and whose approbation had recompensed, the unwearied labours of her useful life.

Her minister.

While they were thus sitting together the door of an inner room opened, and the minister appeared.

He was now become a very old man.

Ninety years he had seen.

His frame of the extremest tenuity, his stooping gait, his pale thin face, and scanty grey hair, told of his great age, and of the labour of a life not past without the experience of much sorrow and care.

But his fine expanded brow, his still clear and intelligent eye, his mouth so grave yet sweet, his whole venerable appearance, gave evidence that life had been spent wisely and well.

She whom he had followed, had venerated in life and supported in death, had long gone before him into those regions of ineffable and unsullied love and light into which he steadily, in the spirit, looked.

He had tarried, content to remain and attend the earthly pilgrimage of her so inexpressibly dear to them both.

He had stood by to strengthen and support her soul in its hours of darkness, and he had lived to

exult in the rich harvest which had arisen under the ploughshare of sorrow.

He had lived to witness the full fruition of all those expectations which he and Mary had placed upon Joan.

With how much secret joy, with what calm seriousness of satisfaction, did he now see the child of those dearest hopes, the object of such intense interest, now playing that part which they had so fondly anticipated,—a royalty of virtue and usefulness amid the daughters of women!

“How are you to-day, my dear Mr. M'Dougal? This is the first time we have met this morning,” said Joan, rising from her chair as the door opened, taking him by both hands and drawing him gently towards the fire. “I went out so early; and I would not disturb you, for I was afraid you had not slept well, as you were not stirring.”

“The old eye is wakeful,” said Mr. M'Dougal, “but the silence of midnight is not solitary. It is peopled with many spirits,—the spirit of the past, which is rather solemn than mournful; and the spirit of the present, which you make serene. What have you been doing to-day, labourer in God's vineyard?” added he, sitting down in his arm-chair and resting his hands upon his knees.

“I have been down upon this young lady's affairs into the very heart of that part of West-

minster which, I believe, they used to call Tothill Fields."

"Miss Nevil, pray let me introduce you to Mr. M'Dougal, the oldest friend I have in the world;" with a look and in a tone of voice which expressed all the warmth of her affection.

"Miss Nevil, sir. You who love energy will love Miss Nevil, who toils unremittingly in the ungrateful task of educating most unmanageable children, in order to maintain not only her own independence, but three children, the offspring of her father by a second wife. Do not blush, dear Angela," as the colour overspread the fair young creature's cheek; "it is to give Mr. M'Dougal pleasure that I tell him of these things."

"Let me take your hand, my dear," said Mr. M'Dougal, with that authority which is given by great old age; "and let me look into your fair young face. Yes, virtue is a noble thing, when it is the final and dear-bought result of a life of strong discipline; but when we see it in the opening of the day—when it is as the free gift of God to a sweet and generous nature—then it is precious, indeed. Sweet young lady, I am not going to praise you, but to congratulate you."

He still kept holding her hand, and his dim blue eye scanned, with much attention, that sweet and interesting face.

"There are the lines of suffering and sorrow

in it, I see," said he ; " but there is the sure trust of faith, and the strength of a holy heart. The old man's blessings be upon thee, my child !"

" Is your letter finished ?" said Joan ; for a servant entered to fetch the letters for the post.

" Here it is ; and now," looking with some uneasiness at the French clock upon the chimney-piece, " it is time, is it not, that I should go home ?"

" I believe it will be better, though I am very sorry to lose you. But will you excuse my going with you ? for I find so much here that must be done, and about which I must consult with Mr. M'Dougal, that I believe I cannot spare time to go out again to-day : for really there is such a quantity of matter accumulated these two days, that I am afraid, my dear sir, if we work like horses we shall hardly get through it in time. I shall call upon you, my dear, in a day or two ; in the mean time, if you have an answer to your letter, and I can be of use to you in any way, you must write to me."

CHAPTER XIII.

It is one of the characteristics of a great mind, that it can contract and dilate itself.—SIR THOMAS RAFFLES.

AND so they parted. Angela returned to the labours of the schoolroom, while Joan, instead of going as was usual to the table and taking up a mass of reports, petitions, and various papers of that description, to be looked over and arranged, came and drew her chair beside Mr. M'Dōugal, and said,—

“ I will begin with private business first. Here is a letter I want to talk to you about in the first place, and the affairs of that pretty young creature who has just left us is another. Oddly enough

they are, in a certain point of view, connected together. Hear Mrs. Darby's letter first:—

Pulermo, — 7th, 18—.

MY DEAREST MISS GRANT,

We have been in this most exquisite place now nearly six months, and Mr. Darby has not been idle; but the society here is, in many respects, in the very lowest state of degradation; and he finds all his efforts are vain to organise any thing like a rational system of amusement for the English gentlemen who may be found at this place. Only think of the barbarous way in which they conduct their horse-racing, for instance, and every thing is of a piece with it. Conceive of starting horses without jockeys, and with spurs dangling by a bit of riband to their sides, so that the horse is left to his unassisted efforts; and all the complication of circumstances produced by the jockeying of the jockey, the natural force of the horse,—all which, as Mr. Darby says, constitute the very *animus* of betting, at an end.

He has over and over again said, that unless he could organise something better, it would be impossible for him to exist here; indeed, poor man, he does nothing but yawn all day long, and walk up and down the streets with his hands in his

pockets, staring about him. So the long and the short is, that he insists upon returning to England, and going down to that house of his in Cambridgeshire, that he may be near Newmarket, and so on. One can't wonder at him, poor man! it's quite natural. But what is to become of Augusta and me?

You know what shocking luck he had last year; well, it's of no use grieving about that! But he has dipped himself immensely; and, in short, how we are to live in England till Augusta comes of age, I don't know. This is such a cheap place, you can't conceive; and it's excessively unlucky that we can't stay here. But Mr. Darby won't hear of it, and is it to be wondered at?

Now, the worst is, that it will be quite impossible for us to come up to London this season: we absolutely have *not* the money. How Mr. Darby means to do for his betting, I am sure I can't guess. As for asking you, you stingy creature, to lend one a few hundreds, which you would *never* miss, I know of old it's no use, so I say nothing of it,—except that it's horrid work for my poor nerves to have to live in that detestable Cambridgeshire, which is like being buried alive. However, I don't feel so much for myself as for Augusta.

I don't know how her affairs are going on, for she tells me nothing ; but Mr. Vavasour and she seem always quarrelling. However, as Lady Missenden seems quite at ease about the subject, and as nothing is said, of course the old engagement stands.

He's a fine youth in his way ; but, to tell the truth, not much to my taste, and certainly not to Mr. Darby's. He calls him "a poor snob," and "a muff," and so on ; for he cares neither for driving, nor hunting, nor racing ; and, I verily believe, never had the spirit to make a bet in his life. What can one think of such a man ?

Such a fine spirit as Augusta has, I should have thought she would have absolutely abhorred him ; but, in spite of her being quarrelling with him from morning to night (that is, talking *at* him, and abusing him to his face in her animated way, for he says so little himself, you cannot think), I do think Augusta's very fond of him in her heart.

One reason is about drawing. Mr. Vavasour is for ever drawing. He's out all day with his portfolio and things, and his paint-boxes, and he does bring home wonderfully beautiful sketches, that's certain ; and now nothing on earth will content Augusta but she must learn to draw too. There are no such things as masters to be got

here—one must go to Rome or Naples for that ; and now this scheme has come into her head : you know what an inventive fine head she has.

Well, when I said, with my longest face, “ We must go to Cambridgeshire, my dear, I am very much afraid ! ” she slapped her hand against her knee, and said, “ Then I know what *I’ll* do,—I’ll learn drawing there, see if I won’t ! ” Instead of vexing herself about being buried down in that horrid place, she actually said this,—“ Then I’ll learn drawing, see if I won’t ! ”

She does not seem to be sorry to come to England ; but then the Missendens are about to move, bag and baggage, as soon as the weather’s a little better. They come by sea, we by land ; for we must be back by a certain day—when the grand match between Wildfire and Coromandel is to come off.

My dear Miss Grant, I am perfectly shocked at this long scribble of mine, but I haven’t quite done yet. You see you are such a dear, clever, good creature, and you know such loads of governesses, and *dames de compagnie*, and things, and I don’t know what, one never comes in vain to you.

Now it strikes me, that though Augusta pretends not to care at all for this being buried alive (for it really is neither more nor less—at least, to

me, I am sure), that she'll want a companion of her own age; and as for the drawing, why, bless me, she may get masters easier here than in Cambridgeshire! But, now, this is what I have thought of. You know young women are so clever and accomplished, and all that, nowadays, that, I dare say, if you would be so *very* kind, you could find us out some young person of Augusta's age who had nice manners, and was pretty and genteel-looking; for Augusta, you know, abhors a fright and a muff, as she calls them, and would do nothing but turn them into ridicule from morning to night; but some nice, clever, agreeable young woman, who could keep her company in her walks,—for walk she will, I know, when she gets there, and I cannot bear her going out alone—and could read and chat with her when she wished it; and could, at the same time, teach her the rudiments of this drawing, which would be a great amusement to her, she seems to think. And as she absolutely knows nothing about it, you know, it would not require any very *great* artist to begin her.

Now what do you think of my scheme? Do, pray, ponder it in your wisest head, that, I believe, ever was set on woman's shoulders; and if you think well of it, and if you think it will do, pray tell us of a young person that will suit,

as I dare say you know hundreds and hundreds, which will be just the thing.

My love to dear Mr. M'Dougal, and Augusta would send hers to you if she knew I was writing. She's just now out boating with her father, though it's a very squally day; but the rougher the day, the more that girl likes it. I never saw such a high-spirited creature.

Dear, what a quantity I have scribbled!

Yours, dearest Miss Grant,

Ever affectionately,

LAURA DARBY.

You need not make a screw bargain with the young woman.

I know of old you like to make your friends pay handsomely upon these occasions. Augusta's trustees — though they are so hard with Mr. Darby, and allow such a miserable sum for her board and lodgings—never refuse to come down handsomely about masters, and so on. So please yourself about the terms, it won't hurt *us*.

This letter finished, but not before it had drawn forth from the minister a few of his quiet, sarcastic smiles, Joan folded it, and said,—

“ Now I have a case of conscience to consult you upon. I think this place would just suit

that fine young creature whom I introduced you to ; but then she has engaged herself to Mrs. Usherwood."

" Well," said Mr. M'Dougal, "and for how long has she contracted to be the white slave of that exemplary lady?"

" Of course for no definite time. Still, it seems never right to disturb these sort of arrangements ; but it is my firm conviction that the exertions she is making to gain her miserable pittance of eighty pounds a-year must end by injuring her health. She certainly has prodigious energy, and a spirit that seems invincible ; and the idea that she is slaving to provide for the wants of those little ones supports her in a most astonishing manner. Yet still I cannot help feeling sure that the exertion is too great : it is impossible she can go on at this rate of exhausting fatigue long. And then the innumerable smaller difficulties with which she has to contend !—the envious malice of the elder girls, the spiteful temper of Selina, the obstinate humours of Elizabeth, and the rude, unmanageable spirits of the little ones,—it is too much. And even Mrs. Usherwood herself will be a loser, for she will soon find that she exacts more than it is possible to give, and that the over-loaded one will, finally, sink under her hands!"

" Then why do you ask me any questions

about it? For you have made out so strong a case, that there is but one thing to be said."

"Because I think it so dishonourable," said the conscientious Joan, "to interfere in any way with the dependants of a family into which one is admitted upon terms of intimacy. Situated as I am, there would be no end of it. I might be a receptacle for the complaints of every dissatisfied and unreasonable menial in every house I came near. I should become quite a public nuisance," said she, laughing. "But never was creature more tempted to commit a misdemeanour of this description than I find myself at this moment."

"Could you not persuade Mrs. Usherwood that it would be for her interest to dismiss the young thing?"

"Why, Mrs. Usherwood is rather a difficult person to deal with, you must know; and she is very apt to prize what other people want, merely because they want it. And yet I cannot reconcile myself to the idea of not securing this place with Augusta Darby for Angela. She might be so happy there. One hundred a-year, which I should ask for her, would set her so at ease; and Augusta Darby—who is really a fine, though sadly mismanaged, girl—I am sure, has sense enough to admire and treasure (perhaps, in some degree, imitate) such a fine, high-principled creature as Angela."

“ And not be jealous of her ? She is inconveniently pretty, poor young thing ! ”

“ And not be jealous of her, in spite of her being so pretty : for Augusta, in the first place, is a remarkably fine, handsome girl herself ; and, besides, her heart is too warm and her spirit too high for such mean passions. That is one advantage, at least, of having had the world her own way in her youth ; it never enters her head to be jealous of any one’s good fortune, which, as she takes the world, rarely can approach her own.”

“ But you forget the drawing. Does this little paragon of yours possess that accomplishment in addition to so many others ? ”

“ Yes, to a very remarkable degree. She was giving lessons one day to my little favourite Theresa when I came in, and I was astonished at the ability she shewed ; and after the lesson was over I looked over her portfolio, and saw it had once been intended that she should be an artist. But I could not bear an artist’s life for her. This place with Augusta Darby would be ten thousand times better.”

“ Then I see nothing for you but to attempt the impossible task of making Mrs. Usherwood as reasonable as Miss Grant, and as ready to sacrifice her own humours or wishes to the good of others.”

CHAPTER XIV.

But haste we from these melancholy shores,
Nor to deaf winds and waves our fruitless plaint
Pour forth. THOMSON.

BUT the matter was decided of itself in a much shorter time than any one had imagined.

For some time Angela had been suffering occasionally from intensely painful nervous headaches, the effect of over-exertion, and which never failed when they occurred to call forth the most severe animadversion from Mrs. Usherwood, and many ill-natured inuendoes from the young ladies.

But neither the animadversions of Mrs. Usherwood, nor the ill-nature of the young ladies, could prove stimulus sufficient to dissipate those attacks, which, being occasioned by too great exhaustion of the nervous powers, every additional effort only served to increase.

The intervals between the fits of illness became less, and the attacks themselves more intense in their character; still—as in cases of this nature it usually happens—she was tolerably at ease when not under their immediate influence; and as Miss Grant had never happened to witness one of them, and no complaints had been made, Joan was little aware of the true state of the case, otherwise it is probable all her scruples would have yielded to the urgent necessity of rescuing this young sufferer from her present situation without further delay.

It had been a foggy, oppressive day; the east wind brought all the heavy miasma from the vast city towards this end of it, and the thick yellow vapours lay like a pestilential cloud upon the air.

She had found herself more languid than usual, and the children appeared, or had been, more than usually tiresome.

With temples throbbing as if they would burst, and eyes bloodshot and straining, she had sat in that close little schoolroom for several hours, vainly endeavouring to force her attention to her task.

It would not be; nature was completely exhausted. The words began to dance before her dizzy eyes, the sound of the children's voices to echo in a confused manner in her ears; her head

dropped upon her hand, and she fell, for the moment, into a sort of stupor.

She was aroused by the gentle hand of Theresa pulling at hers which covered her eyes, and saying,—

“ Oh, you have got a bad headache, I’m sure—almost as bad as mine ; you can’t do any thing if it’s like mine—you had better go to-bed and lie down.”

“ I believe I had,” said Angela, looking up in a confused manner, and seeming scarcely to know where she was or what she said.

“ Tell them to mind their lessons, will you, dear ? I must go up stairs and be quiet. Oh, my head !”

This slight complaint was wrung from her by the almost insupportable agony of the pain.

“ May I go up with you and fetch you some sal volatile, and make you comfortable ?” said the little girl, affectionately.

“ Thank you—thank you !” was all she could say.

She could scarcely see, and scarcely stand. They left the room together.

Selina and Elizabeth, as usual, exchanged ill-natured smiles, and the little girls laughed aloud.

“ We shall have another poorly governess,” said they ; “ and such fun !”

And far from minding their lessons, they began to jump about and make a prodigious noise.

“What’s all this noise that I hear?” said Mrs. Usherwood, suddenly opening the door; “I can absolutely hear you down into the drawing-room. Miss Nevil!—where’s Miss Nevil? And where’s Theresa?”

“Miss Nevil’s got a bad headache, and is gone to lie down, and she sent Theresa to get her some sal volatile.”

“Upon my word!” said Mrs. Usherwood, firing up; “she is, is she?”

She was soon at Miss Nevil’s door.

“May I come in?” said she, opening it without knocking, and without waiting for an answer.

“Well, Miss Nevil, I hope you find your bed comfortable! A very proper place for a young person at mid-day, upon my word! I heard the children making a tremendous noise; we were quite disturbed in the drawing-room. I come up stairs, and I find their governess on her bed!”

“I am extremely sorry, madam,” faltered Angela, turning round, for she lay with her face to the wall, and endeavoured to shade the light from her aching eyes with her hand; “but I have such a dreadful headache—I really could

not sit up any longer. I hope it will be better soon, and that I shall be able to go down again."

"I hope so, indeed," said Mrs. Underwood, drily. "I pretend to no great experience in headaches; *I* have never time to be ill, whatever others may have. But it's rather hard upon me, I must say, to fall in with another invalid governess; and when you assured me, too, that your health was so good."

"Indeed it was, madam, when I came first here."

"And do you mean to insinuate that there is any thing in this place that can have affected your health? I think," said Mrs. Usherwood, indignantly, "that after the miserable doghole that I brought you from, you would not have thought of precisely representing the apartments in Mr. Usherwood's house as injurious to your health. I don't know what luxuries you would have that are denied you; but since Miss Grant has taken so much notice of you, you do not know exactly what you would be at, I presume. I never heard of these headaches till lately."

"They did not come on till lately," said Angela, pressing her forehead with both hands; "but now they are so bad!"

And the pain absolutely forced the tears into her eyes.

“ You make a great deal of a little thing,” said Mrs. Usherwood, “ I must think. Headaches are the commonest things in the world ; but this is the first time I ever heard of their making any body cry. Even Theresa—poor little thing!—has a little more resolution than that. I must beg of you not to exhibit this weakness before the children.”

The answer was only a groan. The pain she was in was insupportable, and nothing but the most perfect quiet could relieve it ; and the dreaded presence of Mrs. Usherwood seemed to drive her almost to distraction.

“ And you attribute your headaches to the rooms, I suppose ?” said Mrs. Usherwood, looking round ; “ as if this was not good enough for you !”

“ Oh ! not that—not that,” said the poor sufferer : “ more likely it is the work. Indeed, I wish to do it ; but it is too much—too much !” said she ; and as the words trembled upon her lips, she sank back insensible upon her pillow.

In spite of her principles of incredulity with regard to illness, Mrs. Usherwood could not help being a little alarmed at this. She hastily left the room, and summoning the housekeeper—who, in this house, was supposed not only to be the substitute for the mistress in carrying out her financial arrangements, but in the performance of

many important duties, among which attending upon the sick and visiting the poor may be enumerated,—she went down stairs, a good deal vexed and a little hurried, and rejoined her elder daughters in the drawing-room.

I don't think that the least feeling of pity for the poor young creature, thus—like the high-mettled courser fallen in the shafts—sinking under the weight of the duties that necessity had forced upon her, visited Mrs. Usherwood's bosom at this moment.

She was not, in the main, an ill-natured woman—nay, had the reputation of being a tolerably good-natured one; and so she was when no interests of her own interfered with such feelings. She liked very well to be the dispenser of pleasure to others when, at the same time, she did not inconvenience herself; but she had none of that consistent regard for the rights, or that benevolent sympathy with the wants and sufferings, of her fellow-creatures, which is the source of those innumerable self-sacrifices to equity, or efforts in the cause of benevolence, which mark the course of the just and the kind.

As regarded those dependent upon her this was more particularly the case; her parsimony made her a rigorous exacter of stipulated services, without reference to the health or powers of those to

whom they were committed : weakness or sickness in those receiving her wages always excited her indignation rather than pity. She thought only of her own loss, and forgot their misfortune.

Mrs. Usherwood — and there are many Mrs. Usherwoods in the world — considered herself wronged when people were incapacitated.

It was impossible to resist the evidences of Miss Nevil's indisposition. There was nothing remaining for her except to be very much vexed, and think herself the person very much to be pitied, for this provoking *contretemps*. It was so hard upon her, after having got rid of one sickly governess, to be plagued immediately with another ; “ it was enough to vex a saint.” Some people seem to think the saints had very irritable tempers.

So she opened the drawing-room door, where the three Miss Usherwoods were sitting employed in a sort of strenuous idleness ; one copying music into a beautiful little hot-pressed music-book, another inserting prints from “ The Keepsake ” into an album, a third with her frame of embroidery before her, saying,—

“ Did you ever hear any thing so provoking ? This girl—this Miss Nevil—has actually fallen ill too ! ”

“ Oh,” said Matilda, “ as for that, I think you need not bother yourself much about that. Miss Nevil’s ill and well ; if we are to believe Selina and Elizabeth, very much depends upon how she chooses it to be.”

“ That wouldn’t be so intolerable,” said Mrs. Usherwood, “ for one can soon frighten people out of these imaginary illnesses. But this is a great deal more provoking ; for there is no flattering one’s self—she really *is* ill. And what *am* I to do with her ?”

“ Send her home, I should think,” said Lucy.

“ That’s easily said, Miss Lucy,” was the mother’s reply, who always felt irritated when people proposed an easy remedy for her domestic perplexities ; “ but she really, with all her faults, suits me very well, and it’s not so easy to get another.”

“ I should think nothing on earth was more easy,” said Lucy ; “ the loads and loads of young women that want places.”

“ Nothing surprises me more,” put in the eldest sister, who was bending over her embroidery frame, “ than the plague people give themselves about getting servants, and governesses, and so on. Why, the columns of ‘ The Times ’ are loaded with advertisements of people begging for places ! I am sure, if I had a house like mamma to manage, it should be a word and a blow with me ; I

would never keep an incompetent person for a day."

The young lady who gave this energetic advice was one who never gave herself trouble about any one earthly thing. She spent her time between her embroidery-frame and idle company, and would and could not exert herself so far as to discharge a maid who teased her in every way, relying upon her mistress's indolence to retain one whom her habit of doing absolutely nothing for herself had rendered necessary to her.

Lucy and Matilda, both of them much more quick-sighted than their sister, who was in the habit of uttering these sort of absolute ideas, and, in consequence, thinking herself a woman of a very strong character, exchanged somewhat sarcastic smiles at this sortie, which Miss Underwood having uttered, she bent her head over her frame again and relapsed into silence.

"Old maids' husbands and bachelors' children," and so on, Mrs. Usherwood comforted herself with saying, but ended with—"I really don't know what must be done."

"Send her away," said Matilda; most glad to be delivered from the presence of a person in the family whose beauty and accomplishments, whenever she was produced, threw her own so much into the shade. "Send her away at once; it's plain she either is, or thinks herself, quite too

delicate a person for what she has to do here. You will have nothing but conflicts as long as she stays with us."

"And then we shall have Joan Grant making one of her long disapproving faces, I know," said Lucy.

This last remark seemed to arouse Mrs. Usherwood's attention.

She stopped where she was, put her finger to her face, and seemed considering.

She was considering whether the terms upon which she wished to stand with Miss Grant would be best secured by dismissing or by retaining this young creature.

This poor young creature, with three little children dependent upon her for bread.

Believe it as you will, or not—I hope a great, great many of you, will find it impossible to believe it—the situation of Miss Nevil herself never once crossed Mrs. Usherwood's thoughts. While debating this matter with herself, never did she once reflect upon the injury she had herself inflicted upon a girl so young and delicate, by thus suffering the willing labourer to tax herself beyond her strength, nor upon the utter ruin to all her prospects, which might be the result of this incapacitating illness. She cast not one thought upon any thing beyond her own interests and her own convenience, both as regarded the

keeping of a very valuable and cheap governess, or with relation to Miss Grant.

But the promptings of jealousy prevailed at length over every other consideration; Angela was evidently becoming a favourite with Miss Grant, to the exclusion, as it appeared to her, of her own daughters, whom that lady seemed to like and notice less and less every day. This illness furnished a good excuse for setting her aside; so she kept repeating it was quite contrary to all her principles—and she hated to deviate from her principles—to retain any person of delicate health in her service.

“I think it will be better to get rid of her at once, as you say, Matilda,” was the result of her rumination; and in these words she communicated it to her daughters.

The fall of a favourite is always the signal for a general attack upon all sides.

The hawks and kites gather round the expiring lamb.

“I am so glad!” cried Lucy and Matilda.

“You are quite right, mamma,” decided Miss Usherwood.

And then all sorts of little disparaging sentences followed; such as,—

“I never liked her; she’s much too fine for her place; never can forget she was the daughter of some officer or another. As for the children, they

can't abide her ; she's so strict with some, and spoils the others. Selina and Elizabeth can never do any thing right ; Theresa and Julia, never any thing wrong."

"My mind is made up," said Mrs. Usherwood, with decision ; "and the sooner I communicate my resolution the better."

Now much of this barbarity upon the part of Mrs. Usherwood, which will to many appear, I hope, incredible, arose not only from her obstinate habit of not choosing to believe people were sick till the fact was proved beyond contradiction, but from a far worse disposition, not uncommon among selfish people, of being absolutely jealous of any one being really ill.

To be indisputably ill carries with it a certain distinction in some people's eyes — people in such circumstances demand *some* consideration ; *some* indulgences, *some* *égards*, must be granted to their necessities, which these sort of spirits cannot bear to bestow.

The *Grand Monarque* was, in his domestic tyranny, a signal instance of this species of pride and selfishness, which infests many a smaller household.

While this conversation was going on in the drawing-room, Angela had been left to the care of the housekeeper.

“ Like master like man.”

Oh, how true those old proverbs are !

Mrs. Richards was just as hard and sceptical in cases of sickness as Mrs. Usherwood, and more ill-tempered, because upon her devolved the trouble of attending to them.

Her remedies were, however, judicious, though roughly administered ; and Angela, recalled to herself, now first felt the cruel want of that ministering kindness which she had so often herself bestowed, and to the full value of which she was happily insensible till sickness had laid its depressing hand upon her in its turn, and the brave independence of little evils which she had so long maintained was at an end.

Oh, how her poor aching head longed to repose upon some kind sustaining arm ; her dazzled eyes to rest in a tempered light ; her vibrating ear to be soothed with the soft whispering of affection,—those tones with which she had so often soothed her poor Margaret ! Her lips were parched with thirst, but there was no one to offer her refreshment ; in the timidity of her weakened spirits she dared not ask for tea.

“ A little cold water, pray.”

But there happened to be none in the room. The careless housemaid had not filled her bottles ; and Mrs. Richards—fat Mrs. Richards—did not offer to go down the steep stairs to fetch her any.

She sat there by the bedside drawing her heavy breath; the sound of every thick inspiration striking in regular pangs upon the nervously excited ear, just as the ticking of a clock which others cannot even hear, becomes a torment insupportable to those with nerves thus affected, like the drop of water falling at measured intervals upon the head. So sat Mrs. Richards puffing like a porpoise, and watching her poor patient with an impatience she did not attempt to disguise, uttering, from time to time, a fretful—

“Don’t you feel better yet?—Isn’t your head easier?—I’m sure you look better!”

What governesses suffer from the insolence of servants is often, I believe, a most heavy item in their painful and difficult life, and is a matter the mother and mistress should carefully keep her eye upon.

Mrs. Usherwood opened the door and came in.

“Well, Richards, how are you going on?”

“She says she’s no better,” was Richards’s reply. “Could I speak to you, ma’am?”

And the mother and the housekeeper stepped into the little passage together.

“Well, what do you think of her, Richards?”

“I don’t know exactly what to make of it, ma’am. But she’s really very ill, that’s certain; and I think, ma’am, if you will take my advice, you’ll send her out of the house while she can be

moved. It's like the beginning of a fever—and only think of the dear children!"

Mrs. Usherwood would have been very glad indeed to have acceded to this proposal, and thus have relieved herself of the burden of her presence for a day after having resolved upon discharging her; but while she was meditating how to carry the measure into effect, all at once it struck her, "What would Miss Grant say to such a proceeding?" Having no conscience of her own, Miss Grant's conscience served in some slight degree as a substitute; and it is astonishing how much good people of Miss Grant's influence often do accomplish, simply by furnishing people with what they so very much want: their known and uncompromising censure of what is unfeeling and wrong, keeps people alive upon the subject.

Mrs. Usherwood felt certain Miss Grant would disapprove of thus turning her out of the house as a very harsh and unjustifiable proceeding, unless the measure could be defended by the more pressing one of dangerous infection; and even then she might not be quite satisfied as to its humanity. To keep her in ignorance of the proceeding would be impossible.

"Do you think there is any danger of infection then?" she said, hoping Richards would answer in the affirmative.

But Richards could not pledge her medical

reputation upon so palpable a misrepresentation ; so she only said,—

“ Wherever there’s a bad headache, one does not know what may come of it.”

“ It would be a satisfaction to know,” said Mrs. Usherwood ; “ for I don’t think one could very well send her out of the house in her present state unless there was danger to the children.”

“ Perhaps we’d better send for Mr. Trueman, and ask his opinion,” suggested Richards.

“ I hate sending for him ; he does run up such bills,” answered her mistress. “ It’s too bad to have to go to all this expense and have a person falling sick upon one’s hands—utterly useless—and a mere expense to one—which I am sure I am very ill able to bear. I thought you could tell me at once whether there was any danger of infection, Richards,” added Mrs. Usherwood, peevishly.

“ Well, so I think I can ; only I’ll not vouch for it. I don’t think there’s any, but it may be the beginning of a long, troublesome illness,—who knows ? And the best way would be to get her out of the house while we can.”

CHAPTER XV.

The darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

COWPER.

THE object of this heartless consultation lay, meanwhile, extended upon her little pallet, her face pressed downwards upon her pillow, endeavouring, if possible, to lull the agony of intense pain.

Courageous she was, and patient she was. Patience is the offspring of true courage. She had, too, as you well know, within her, that source of true courage and of inexhaustible patience, the most childlike obedience and submission to the decrees of that great Father from whose righteous hand she received, in cheerful faith and firm reliance, all the painful circumstances of her life.

In Him she trusted now, and received the

excruciating pain which throbbed in her temples with that resignation, that submission, that love more than both, which sweetened even this agony, and fulfilled the gracious promise of a peace which shall not fail.

Exemption from suffering she had never been promised, but peace she had, and she experienced it.

Yet, resigned as she was, strong as was that good courage, and firm as was that fabric planted upon a rock, it was with a shock of terror not to be expressed that she listened to Mrs. Usherwood's cruel sentence.

"I am afraid, Miss Nevil," that lady had said as she stood by the side of the little bed, and watched her endeavouring vainly to suppress her groans and diminish the agony she endured by squeezing her forehead against her pillow, "that you are really going to be very ill—Richards says so, and I think so myself; but, well or ill, it is evident to me that your strength is not equal to my situation, and, therefore, I do you a kindness by mentioning this at once. As I cannot afford to lose time, I shall begin to-morrow to inquire for a person to fill your place. But I beg," seeing poor Angela lift her head suddenly from the pillow and glance at her with an eye of anxious terror—"I beg you will not hurry yourself; you are quite welcome to stay

here till you feel well enough to go home ; only, as there is no engagement about warning, or so on, and this is certainly your own fault—I mean your own misfortune—I think you cannot expect the stipulated salary shall be long continued, when you are so utterly incapable of performing the stipulated services.”

“ Oh, my children ! my children ! ” burst from the poor young creature’s heart, as, utterly overwhelmed by this new and most unexpected misfortune, her spirits suddenly gave way ; violent hysterics followed—she laughed and screamed, and wept and struggled, in turns.

Mrs. Usherwood, thoroughly frightened at this dreadful scene—for in that lion frame of hers she possessed a coward heart—hurried out of the room, leaving the unhappy girl to Richards ; who, hastening in, applied the usual old-fashioned remedy of scolding, and rating, and endeavouring to terrify the agitated girl into her senses again.

“ Well, I’ve seen quite enough,” said Mrs. Usherwood, as she went down stairs ; “ this exhibition has settled the matter with me.”

The paroxysm was long, but it yielded at last to Mrs. Richards’s methods, good or bad. Angela sank back exhausted into a half-stupor, half-

slumber, and Mrs. Richards, confiding her to the care of the under-housemaid, went down to refresh herself with a cup of tea and buttered muffins.

Now, such is human life.

In ideal inventions of this nature it is easy to heap misery upon misery, till, too carelessly receiving them as a picture of human history, our faith in the merciful dispensations of Providence is troubled and darkened, for want of correcting the tragic picture of the romancer with our own actual experience of things as they have happened to ourselves.

In fact, the workings of actual life — the workings of Providence, as the eye of faith must receive them — are, at least as far as my observation has gone, like the workings of this beautiful and yet impaired creation which surrounds us — full of compensations.

Unmitigated evil is very rare, and whenever it occurs, very brief: some unlooked-for relief, some unexpected alleviation, springs up where it is least looked for: — the Angel of His presence visits the perishing Hagar, though not revealed in the full glory of His outward form.

It was a little thing in itself, but a great thing here.

The under-housemaid was a kind, simple-

hearted young woman, labouring under oppression herself beneath the iron sway of a harsh upper-housemaid—a servant of servants. She had experience to enable her to understand, and a heart to enable her to sympathise, with the same species of suffering in others.

Some—woe is me!—who have suffered from iniquitous tyranny themselves, revenge themselves, as it were, upon others when power falls into their hands, by inflicting the very miseries they have themselves endured: but there are better and gentle natures, and this girl's was one of them.

Hannah was a very kind-hearted, and also a sensible girl; and as she sat down by Angela to watch her for the night, to sit up with her after a day of hard labour, she never once thought about herself or her aching legs, or that it was too bad, after slaving all day, to be kept out of her bed at night; but, coming into the room as gently as she could, and gazing upon the pale face of the sleeping girl, she said to herself,—

“Poor young thing! poor dear! Well, heart alive, but it *is* a pity, and she so young and pretty like!”

And then gently letting fall the curtain, to screen the candle from her eyes, she took out her sewing, and sat down by her side.

The night-lamp was flickering in its socket, but the cold dawn had not begun to break, when Angela opened her eyes and saw the good creature, who had at last dozed off herself, sitting by her.

It was an inexpressible relief to find the kind Hannah, instead of the terrible Mrs. Richards, in attendance; and this perhaps it was which soothed the still excitable nerves, and enabled her to lie quite still as she did, endeavouring to collect her thoughts and review her situation.

She lay so for a long time—the last words of Mrs. Usherwood still sounding in her ears—considering what would become of her.

Was she upon the eve of a long illness, which would perhaps for weeks, perhaps for months, incapacitate her for all exertion, and render it impossible for her to provide for the children, to say nothing of the increased expenses, which she knew must be the inevitable consequence?

And was her salary to cease from so very soon?

What was to become of them all?

Had all her endeavours to do her duty resolutely—her struggles with pain and weariness—her self-sacrifice and daily victory over those

voices within which were tempting her to indulgence and to rest—had they ended in this? In making her a helpless prisoner upon a bed of pain, while her little brothers and sister were crying for food?

“Oh, measure my trial to my strength!”

The words were ejaculated half aloud, and Hannah awoke from her doze.

“Did you want any thing, Miss Nevil?” said she, starting up. “How do you feel? I hope you are better. Are you a little better?”

“The very bad pain seems gone,” said Angela.

“Oh, then I hope you will be able to get up soon, for Mrs. Usherwood don’t like people to be poorly, you know!”

Angela shook her head.

“You do not know how ill I feel, Hannah. I shall try to get up, of course; but I do not think I can stand.”

“But I hope you *will*,” said the girl anxiously; “because, you know, Mrs. Usherwood will not excuse you—she never does any body.”

“I know that,” said Angela sadly; “but it is not of much consequence now—she discharged me last night.”

Hannah let her hands fall into her lap with an exclamation of sorrow and surprise.

“No, really, she didn’t!—and you so good

to the children, and making such a slave of yourself!”

“I could not go on with that.”

“No, I don’t think you could ; and, indeed, I have wondered how you kept on so long. I’ve watched you, Miss Nevil, though you did not perceive it, and I’ve seen how your colour was beginning to come and go, and how you seemed all as if your legs were trembling under you when you went up stairs to bed. It’s just how it used to be before my bad illness, when I was maid-of-all-work to Mrs. Sims.”

“Have you had an illness like mine?” asked Angela, interested in any thing which might afford indications of the nature of the evil which seemed impending over herself.

“Why, Miss Nevil, it was not exactly like ; but it was from the same cause—over-work. I’ve long said how it would end with you, sooner or later ; but I hope you won’t have to go to the hospital as I had.”

“The hospital!—had you to go to the hospital?” cried Angela, with an accent of terror natural at the first mention of the name.

“Not to the hospital!—oh, not to the hospital!” she ejaculated internally ; “save me only from that!”

“The hospital’s not a very bad place now, I

believe," said Hannah; "for since that great and clever Mr. Dickens has written about it. . . . Did you ever read the story, Miss Nevil? it's so pretty. Mr. Ruddiman, the butler, takes in all Mr. Dickens's works, and he lends them to me to read of a Sunday, sometimes. Well, miss, that Mr. Dickens makes great fun, but then he's such a feeling for the poor, it seems as if he could not bear the thought of seeing any body ill-used. But then, miss," added Hannah, in her simple criticism, "don't you think it's a pity so good a gentleman makes so light of the sin of drinking? He who seems to see every thing so natural, must have seen what misery it brings on the poor, as witness my poor dear father, who died in the *tremens*—so shocking! One could think Dickens never took count of all the numbers of people—gentlemen's servants, shop-boys, little tradesmen, and such-like, who think such a great deal about him. I've heard some say Dickens's books are next to the Bible. Oh, I wish he'd write a story about drinking, or at least put in some of his clever, clever words against it,—don't you?"

Angela was not so well read in Dickens as Hannah, nor in the least degree aware of the immense and daily extending power which he wielded; so she did not take up the subject, as Joan would have done had she been in her place, but said,

“ You were telling me of going to the hospital.”

“ Yes, miss. It’s a good many years ago since I was there ; I was a very young girl then, about thirteen, and now I’m past twenty. I was thinking of the nurses ; they used to be so rough and careless, and thinking of nothing but themselves, and the poor patients suffered many and many a thing from them : but it’s all altered as I have heard now, from those who have been in lately ; for none of the nurses likes to be called a Sarah Gamp.”

“ But Mrs. Usherwood will never send me to the hospital, surely ?” said Angela.

“ No, I don’t think she will, miss,” said Hannah, looking rather knowing ; “ because there’s other friends to the poor besides Mr. Dickens ; and she’d no more like Miss Grant to think her unfeeling, than those nurses do to be called Sarah Gampses.”

The idea of Joan Grant, as a refuge in her extremity, had suggested itself to Angela before, but she had not found much comfort in it. The situation seemed one that was beyond the claims of a casual acquaintance sort of friendship such as theirs. It was, in fact, to impose nothing less than the maintenance of a family upon any one who should determine to relieve her ; but now, in her fear and perplexity, the idea again recurred. At least her influence might be of some

avail in softening Mrs. Usherwood's harsh decrees; at all events, her advice and sympathy would be invaluable. She would venture to beg of this kind friend to visit her, and she could do it with the less difficulty as she was not yet an utter beggar. She need not yet ask alms, her little hoard of money, so carefully husbanded, was not quite exhausted; she need only crave support and advice.

"I wish Miss Grant were here," said she.

"And so do I," responded Hannah, "with all my heart. She's *such* a lady that is—the good she does to gentle and simple is unknown. But why should you not ask her to come to you, Miss Nevil? she never was known to refuse to come to the sick-bed of any one that asked her, be they never so lowly and miserable. And wouldn't she come to your's?—to be sure she would!"

"I wish I could write to her, but my eyes are so dizzy, and my hand shakes so, I am afraid I could not hold a pen."

"I'm but a bad penwoman myself, Miss Nevil, but I learned a little at the charity-school—perhaps I could make a shift if you would tell me what to say."

"Will you try, dear Hannah? What should I have done if you had not been so good to me!"

"Miss, I've thought a good deal about goodness to my fellow-creatures since I've read

Dickens and known Miss Grant. One very often does not think what people may suffer till it's put down in a book, and then one's heart quite bleeds about it. And one doesn't think what any one may do, till one sees a lady like Miss Grant humbling herself to the least little thing that may comfort any one in trouble. Oh, she's done such kind, kind things to many I know you can't think. One's only to be unhappy, and Miss Grant's one's friend; and she was *your* friend before, and now she will be thrice your friend."

"Here's your pen and ink, if I may use it, Miss Nevil," she went on, after looking about for what she wanted; "and may I take this nice paper? La, how pleasant to write upon!—it's like satin!" said Hannah, arranging herself to write by Angela's bedside, and raising her wrist and crooking her fingers, according to the most approved method of rendering penmanship difficult if not impossible. It was a scrawl, but it *was* possible to decipher it, and it contained these few words:—

MY DEAR MISS GRANT,

I am very ill I am afraid, and my head is so confused that I cannot very well think of my own affairs; yet circumstances are very pressing. Would you be so good as to come and see me?—it would be a great charity.

ANGELA.

“I’ll slip down and put this in the post with my own hands,” said the good-natured Hannah; “and you see if she don’t come.”

Joan Grant was at breakfast with Mr. M‘Dougal when the note was put into her hands.

“See!” said she; “what I feared has taken place: this poor girl has fallen ill, and at a most unlucky moment.”

“That may be as it will prove,” said her friend; “this illness may at least unrivet the fetters that bind her free agency and your delicate conscience, my dear. Relieved from the slavery you have described to me, we shall soon see the pretty young thing well again; youth is so elastic, has such an invincible power of re-action.”

Joan rose to ring the bell and order her carriage.

“I am all impatience to be with her. It is, as you say, more than probable that Mrs. Usherwood will be as glad to get rid of her now, as I shall be to take her off her hands. She will be happy in herself, and invaluable to others, as the companion of Augusta Darby.”

And during this time, while relief she little anticipated was at hand, the poor girl, alone in her little close room, but her mind somewhat

restored to its usual equilibrium, and her head relieved by the few hours of sleep she had enjoyed, lay by herself (for Hannah had been obliged to leave her to begin the work of the day), meditating upon her forlorn position.

She then first felt the full extent of those difficulties to which those labouring for their daily bread are exposed; difficulties which at a distance had appeared so little formidable to an enterprising and unbroken spirit, and which had vanquished her in the very outset of her career.

There she lay, the strife with fortune scarcely even begun, a victim to the unheard-of exertions which the meanness and hard-heartedness of others had imposed upon her; imposed by those upon whose benevolence she had no absolute claim it was true, and who on that account seemed to think themselves justified in casting her aside as they might have done some worthless household utensil, the moment she ceased to be of use.

Those numerous ties of connexion, fellowship, and relationship, which link men together, and bind them to the support of each other in the arduous struggles for existence, were not for her; there was not one human being upon whom she had what is called a legitimate claim.

She was lying, alone and deserted, in this obscure chamber of this large and busy house.

The sound of coming and going, the ringing of bells, the confusion of voices, the loud rapings at the door, which shook her poor head as if it would shiver it to pieces, the runnings up and down stairs, the banging of doors, all the noises of an awakened household, unsubdued by tenderness for the poor sufferer on her sick-bed, all reminded her of that busy living life from which she was now excluded.

That current, flowing on only as it were to sweep her poor valueless fragment for ever away.

Surely no fate can be so melancholy as that of sickness under such circumstances.

Then she tried to comfort herself with thinking of Miss Grant. It was the only idea, indeed, to which she could turn with any satisfaction. How kind she had been to her! and how kind she seemed to every one! Joan Grant had not been happy herself; she could feel for others with a sympathy unknown to those who have never known what sorrow was. But, after all, what could she do for her?

With strength to pursue her profession as an instructor, nothing was more easy than to assist her in obtaining a new place; with Miss Grant's large connexions and influence, she felt certain that she could and that she would render her that service; but if incapacitated by sickness, what could even Miss Grant do?

She felt, in truth, at this moment, what many of excitable nerves and delicate frames, however good their general health, have felt,—that it will be impossible to persevere in that particular line of exertion under which the strength has given way, even though that strength should be in great measure restored.

She had not complained, and she had fought courageously against this failing of the body, till she had absolutely broken down, and further resistance was vain; but she now recollected, with something like terror, the gradual advance of her present malady—how for the last week she had every day entered the schoolroom, as she thought and hoped, refreshed by the repose of the night, and how invariably the process of teaching had brought the headache on.

At first late in the day, when she was quite exhausted; but, by insidious degrees, the hour when the pain returned was earlier, the interval of ease shorter, till there was no perfect interval of ease at all; and the increase of the disorder had been only marked by the increased intensity of suffering, until the torment had become intolerable, and thrown her helpless where she lay.

She trembled to think that, even when restored to a certain degree by rest and abstinence from labour, the headache would return as soon as the employment which had occasioned it was resumed.

And yet her mind turned to Miss Grant with a sort of hope.

A vague, ill-defined, but still a cheering hope, that a being so benevolent, so powerful, and so wise, would find means to assist her in her perplexities.

Many were the raps, loud and long, at the house door, and in every one she thought she could distinguish the hand of Miss Grant's footman.

At length there was a ring and no knock; footsteps were heard ascending the stairs, one flight after another, and they approached her door,—it opened, and Joan Grant appeared.

Her face you know was plain, but her countenance was singularly sweet and expressive, with her large, dark, kind eyes, and her gentle, somewhat melancholy, smile.

But now that smile was more sweet, those eyes more full of kind encouragement than ever, as approaching the bedside, sitting down, and taking the hot trembling hand of the poor girl, she said,—

“Mrs. Usherwood has told me what has passed. I hope you are not very ill, for this indisposition I trust will be but the precursor of better and happier days. It was impossible you could have gone on in this way long.”

“I felt it so—I have been feeling it so some time: but one is so unwilling to believe that

one's body is more than a match for one. I thought determination would do any thing, and I was so anxious to persevere."

"Ah, my dear, the pride of our youth and strength! But it is well, while sickness and infirmity are the lot of so large a portion of this world, that we should, all in our turns, learn by experience what it is to suffer. You might, my dear Angela, had you been able to persist in your generous career, have believed that every thing was possible to a resolute will—alas! nothing can be more mistaken. But you are now released from your engagement with Mrs. Usherwood: is it not so?"

"Don't blame her," said Angela. "It is not her fault; you know I could not expect her to keep one who could not perform the duties of her place, and that is my misfortune. If it were my indolence, my carelessness, my incapacity, I could mend; but I have done the best I possibly could, though she does not know it—indeed I have."

"You need not assure *me* of that," said Miss Grant. "Well, my dear, when things are at the worst they must mend: it is a homely proverb, but it has preserved many an overtaxed spirit from despair. And now this sad illness, which must almost have thrown *you* into despair, and this sudden dismissal by Mrs. Usherwood,

will prove, I trust, and I really believe, a very fortunate circumstance. I have heard of something that I think you will like very much, and that will just suit you; and I was sadly perplexed in my mind yesterday to determine whether it would be right to communicate it to you or not. Now I have no further scruples.—But you must get well.”

Angela shook her head mournfully.

“Do not think me weak, or hypochondriacal, or fanciful—it seems shocking to say so—but I *must* rest a little while from teaching.”

“I know that—I have seen cases of this sort before; the employment which has been the occasion of this sort of break-down of the nerves, cannot with impunity be taken up again for a considerable time: but there will be only a very little teaching required in this case, and of a totally different description. To instruct a talented young lady, and to drag forward through the paths of learning a set of unwilling children, are very different tasks,” said she; “and I think you may venture, in a short time, to undertake the one I am proposing: in fact, you will only be expected to give a few drawing lessons, and I do not think you will dislike that. You will find it rather amusing to teach a young lady of about your own age, that is, if it suit the ebbs and flows of her humour to learn;

and for the rest of your time, you will only have to play the part of sister to her—a sister a little wiser, a little more disciplined, and a little more experienced in the art of living to some profit than herself.”

The light, so long obscured, shone again in Angela’s eyes at this announcement; but she could hardly believe her own senses.

“Is it possible?” she said; “dear Miss Grant, is it possible?”

“You will have one hundred pounds a-year, I hope, and that will enable you to provide a little better for the children at home,” Joan went on, looking at her with that peculiar air of kind and tender interest which made her own countenance at times so charming. “But the first thing to be done is to get well, for you must gather up your best looks, and your best wits, and your best spirits, I can tell you, to be a match for the fair Augusta Darby.”

“Is that the young lady’s name? What a pleasant-sounding name!”

“Yes, and it belongs to a very fine girl—a very nice girl, I may say, in spite of all her faults; for she has quite her share of those interesting things. But you are to cure her.”

“I cure her! I, who have no experience, and feel as if now I had lost all the little strength of body or mind I ever had!”

“It will all come again, my dear, in due time ; don’t be discouraged about that. But we will speak about this another time ; at present we must talk of your removal. I don’t think you will improve while you remain here. The house is too bustling and noisy for you ; you had better at once come to me. Do you think you can muster courage to rise and attempt the removal?”

“Oh, yes ; I will get up directly and be ready.”

I suppress all the expressions of thankfulness that broke forth from time to time, as, with the assistance of the kind Hannah, who was again summoned, Angela managed to complete her toilette and prepare for her departure. Miss Grant, in the mean while, anxious to spare her all fresh excitement, going down stairs to announce her immediate departure to Mrs. Usherwood, and take leave by proxy both of that lady and of the children.

She found Mrs. Usherwood somewhat uneasy in her mind. The hasty feelings of irritation and vexation under which she had so unfeelingly dismissed her governess having subsided, she had the grace to feel a little remorseful for her proceedings, and received Miss Grant with something very like embarrassment.

Joan’s manner was certainly colder than usual. Mrs. Usherwood made what excuses she could for herself, dilating upon her fear of low fever,

infection, and so on; the absolute necessity of having a fresh governess in her turbulent school-room; and, in short, running through those reasons, as she called them, which had served to blind her own mind to the cruelty of her conduct.

Miss Grant listened patiently, and then announced her intention of immediately removing Angela to her own house.

The leave-taking with the children was a more interesting matter. In spite of their inclination to resist her authority, and their tormenting and teasing habits, Angela had been gradually acquiring real influence over their minds, and a place in their affections. The elder girls looked blank, and loudly declared their sorrow at the intelligence; poor little Theresa sat crying at her desk.

Miss Grant was pleased. She consoled them as well as she could by promising they should all come to her house to see Miss Nevil when she was a little better; and, kissing little Theresa, said she should see Miss Nevil very often, and help to nurse her sometimes, if she would try to be cheerful with the next governess.

Angela was now ready. She descended the stairs, and entering Miss Grant's carriage took leave, as we do, of Mrs. Usherwood.

CHAPTER XVI.

Form'd in the prodigality of nature ;
Endearing, generous, gay, and wild.

THERE are moments in life, when the various comforts which the researches of science and the arts of luxury have accumulated around us in this comfortable age may be considered in the light of real and most substantial blessings.

Many a sinking, patient sufferer, has found cause to bless the inventions which minister sensations too exquisitely excited, and to what may be termed the accumulated horrors of the sick-bed and the sick-room as they existed, scarcely half a century ago ; but in spite of this the unnatural demand upon strength had been made too long for even the perfect relief Angela now enjoyed to insure immediate recovery, and it was weeks before the tender care and generous

hospitality of Miss Grant could restore the strength which over-exertion had exhausted.

Complaints of this description, arising from exhaustion of power, are so wearying—require so much time, so much endurance and fortitude upon the part of the sufferers — so much tenderness and indulgence upon that of their nurses, that no disorder more heavily taxes the patience and affection of friends.

But both did their part in this instance. Angela spared not any of those virtuous efforts with herself which in such cases are indispensable to a cure, and Joan none of those innumerable assistances and alleviations which tend so greatly to abridge the period of suffering. Still these nervous disorders are tiresome, wearying things ; and woe to those careless and indifferent ones, who by their negligence, their hard-heartedness, or their unjustifiable exactions of strength, cause them insensibly to fasten upon those dependent upon them !

Easily arrested in their first symptoms, nothing can be more tedious and discouraging than such disorders when once they have become fixed ; and the worst of it is, that while the utter helplessness of those thus afflicted makes them miserably dependent upon the tenderness and consideration of every creature around them,

there is no class of diseases which so little commands the sympathy of mankind.

Every one agrees that the suffering is dreadful, far exceeding that of severe bodily pain, and yet in almost every case that occurs there is less care, less attention, less sedulous endeavour to relieve the sufferer, than in any other with which I am acquainted.

That there is no immediate danger to life may be one cause of this indifference. The imagination is enlisted in the cause of danger—of death,—while the still more serious apprehension of a continued existence of misery is in comparison disregarded.

Partly, perhaps, this indifference arises from the persuasion that the patient ought and can do much for himself; and this is most certainly the fact: but then it is on the other hand equally a fact, that he can do absolutely nothing, unless he be assisted by others. There is not a more miserable case of dependence existing than that of the nervous patient.

Painfully affected by slight inconveniences, which to the healthy man are not even perceptible, his sensations excited to that preternatural acuteness which renders those senses intended only to convey wholesome impressions the source ~~—stir—~~ of perpetual pain; he finds the common

stir
— of life, the mere noise and bustle of ordinary existence, an insupportable source of suffering, and not only of suffering, but of positive injury, by increasing the irritation of the nerve whence all the mischief arises. He is miserably dependent upon the consideration of every body, and at all times; for to him the ticking of the clock, the church bell, the footsteps on the stair, even the birds in the trees, may prove a source of misery, and the very grasshopper a burden!

To be a martyr to all these capricious sensations, and to have to plead for mercy to those to whom those very pleadings appear the excess of extravagance, of caprice, and self-will,—what a fate! And, worst of all, to know that all the comforts, and luxuries, and indulgences of life, which every body is wanting for themselves, and wishing for if they could get them!—such as travelling without fatigue—cheerful scenes—enter-taining books—delicate food—delicate lodging—quiet—abstinence from all exertion—amusement, every thing which a person is ashamed to ask for, afford the only chance of recovery,—to know all this, to feel how hateful the patient becomes through that apparent selfishness, bred of the very necessities of his illness—how still more hateful he must become by exacting and demanding those indulgences if withheld; and yet that the only chance of his restoration to the

common life and sympathy of mankind must arise from such assistance being granted !

The poor heart, wounded by little careless acts of unkindness, probably never intended, but acting with exaggerated force upon sensations so tremblingly alive, struggling against all these mental sorrows, while the frame is shaking, and trembling, and sinking. And sleep, which offers even to the victim on the rack of pain its sweet restoring intervals of heavenly repose, forsakes the poor exhausted one !

What an accumulation of sufferings ! They are faintly and imperfectly described here ; but Angela would have had to endure them all in their extremest severity—for nothing equals their severity in cases where these maladies proceed from exhaustion, *les vapeurs d'épuisement*—had she not had the infinite happiness of falling into the hands of such a one as Joan Grant.

That true friend, that wise counsellor, that firm and tender minister to want and suffering !

Neither was there, as I have said, upon her own part any want of that virtuous self-government, those determined exertions, without which the ministry of the kindest and wisest will be found ineffectual.

Together they triumphed over this terrible attack, and the rescue of this young creature from a long state of hapless incapacity was added to

Joan Grant's deeds of mercy for this year. By the time Miss Darby arrived in England, Angela was quite ready to be presented to her.

They met first at Miss Grant's house, in New Norfolk Street, where Augusta came the morning after her arrival in town.

She had been acquainted with Miss Grant from a child, and was very much attached to her.

Angela was sitting with her friend in the usual morning-room, employed in arranging some papers for her, while Joan, as usual, was busy at her writing, when—

“Miss Darby,” said the footman, opening the door; and Miss Darby entered the room.

She was a fine, tall, fashionable-looking girl, dressed in a very striking and becoming manner, though something differently from the mode which then reigned in England. She looked to great advantage, as people usually do who appear in the last newly rising fashion from Paris, before it has fully risen upon London.

“How do you do, dear Joan? Busy as ever? What a *bureau de bienveillance* you do keep up here! It makes one ashamed of one's own idleness. Well, how do you do? You look very well, however. And dearest, best of all earthly M'Dougals—not a day older than when I left—how glad I am to see you both again!”

“Dear Augusta,” said Joan, shaking hands

with her, or rather receiving from her hand a most hearty shake, "I am glad to see you looking so well; I never saw you looking better."

"Am I looking well?" said she, turning carelessly to a glass. "I protest I can scarcely believe you. If you knew my history . . . I'll tell it you some time, but never mind now."

"Miss Nevil,"—"Miss Darby," said Joan presenting them.

"Are you to be my new governess?" began Augusta, answering Angela's salute with one very cordial, but with the slightest possible dash of *hauteur* in it. "I protest I think you a vast deal too pretty. Why, you darling, simple-hearted Joan! how could you think I could endure to enlist under my banners a creature so much prettier than myself?"

"Come, come," said Mr. M'Dougal from his seat at the fire, "no false modesty, if you please; Miss Nevil has only to look in the glass to assure herself that all this is nonsense."

"I am very content to let it be so," said Miss Darby, carelessly turning again to Angela, "for I like your looks very much; and you ought, by his account, to like mine still better. So, I conclude, it is settled so. And now, Joan, sit down again, and throw away that everlasting pen, and let us talk together of Palermo."

"It is a lovely spot, I believe; and you had

some friends there,—so you must have enjoyed it much.”

“No; there was nobody there I cared for, except the Missendens—and I don’t know whether I cared for them or not, and I am sure I don’t know why I should.”

Joan looked at her with an expression partly of anxiety, partly of wonder.

“How is Lord Missenden?”

“Oh, he’s better. He’ll live, poor creature! He’ll cumber the ground a little longer. And I don’t see why he shouldn’t, for he stands in nobody’s way, because there is nobody coming after him.”

“What do you mean?” asked Mr. M‘Dougal.

“A young lady, and forget Mr. Vavasour!”

“Mr. Vavasour forgets himself,” said she.

“It’s really too provoking, Joan Grant. It would drive you and that virtuous M‘Dougal mad if you could see it,—how he’s idling his existence away, doing nothing upon earth but draw, draw! As if a man’s life were given him to draw!”

“You are joking, I hope. It is ten thousand pities to see such a man as that forgetting all the claims of his fortune and station in the mere pursuit of an art, however beautiful,” said Mr. M‘Dougal.

“Fortune! not much of that, poor fellow! I believe. That’s been eat up at *furo* ages ago.”

“You don’t mean to say Mr. Vavasour games!” cried Joan.

“He, poor soul! He hasn’t the spirit for it! No; he does nothing but sketch, and lie upon the rocks, and look at the sea, and heave sighs like Mount Etna—such sighs! It was his father I was thinking of. You know he’s just the emptiest head in the world. If you put peas into it, they would rattle as if they were in a bladder. He never had two ideas beyond the dice-box. Well, he’s made a pretty mess of it, they say!”

“That’s a shocking thing!” said Mr. M’Dougal; “but good comes out of evil. This may force Mr. Vavasour out of his indolent indifference; he will be obliged to use his abilities if he have nothing else to depend upon, which will be well for himself and for his country.”

“*His country!* Much he cares for *that*. It’s *the* country the gentle Werther is raving after. It’s the strangest misanthrope you ever saw; only it’s not man in the abstract he hates, but man in society. You never saw such a bear, one should call him, only he’s so excessively handsome and elegant. No; he seems sublimely indifferent to every thing. Lady Missenden is miserable about it, and quite cries when she thinks of it; but she may thank herself,—she made such a fuss about him.—He could never do wrong—and now, as she says, after all the sa-

crifices made to his education, he seems as if he would never go right! All he appeared to want was to get back to England, and yet there seems nothing he means to do when he gets there. So like a child! Never satisfied where he is—such a restless desire of mere change: but no wonder one so idle finds every thing and every place horribly dull. However, we saw the poor old lord, and his wife and son, and Tom Levet—Oh, do you know, Miss Grant, he's actually picked up Tom Levet for his valet, and he's made him as sober as a judge! Tom's quite a reformed character. I forgot to enumerate *that* as the result of Mr. Vavasour's Sicilian year—Well, we saw them all shipped, and then we started ourselves. They'll be home, too, in about a month or so. Miss Nevil, I hope you like the country?"

"Yes I do, very much indeed."

"A liking of one used to it? for if you are not used to it, you can have no idea how horribly dull it is. And Cambridgeshire of all places! Were you ever in Cambridgeshire?"

"No, never; but I suppose I can make myself as happy there as I have done in other parts of the world. I care for nothing except living in a close street in town; that is the only existence, in my eyes, almost worse than none."

"Oh, but Cambridgeshire *is* horrid! No trees,

no hedges, no copses, no brooks, no nothing but wheat and bean-fields. No neighbours either near us--but I don't care for that, for if there is a thing that I detest it's country neighbours. But do you know that you are to teach me to draw? I am going to learn to draw, to rival the incomparable Vavasour in strenuous idleness. Miss Grant, what *are* all these dreadful-looking tracts about? I hope you don't write and read tracts?" Turning again to Angela, "It's the only thing about Joan Grant that I don't like; but the association of a woman with tracts is to me insupportable. Are you teetotalising as usual, Joan?"

"Yes, my dear; or something very much like it."

"I think, Mr. M'Dougal, if it had not been for Joan's passion for tracts, she would have been one of the most charming women in existence, and she would have been married ten times over: but what man on earth could fancy a woman with a bundle of tracts in her hand?"

Joan coloured slightly.

"I confess it's the proper calling for an old maid," said she.

"Miss Augusta," put in Mr. M'Dougal, "in the mean time, will be benefitting mankind by her drawings."

"How I do hate all those phrases!" said she, tossing her handsome head. "I cannot suspect

either of you of cant, but you don't keep upon the windy side of it enough ; and I am quite positive numbers and numbers, loads and loads of people, laugh at and ridicule, and almost hate Miss Grant, because of her being so busy about doing good. They don't know you, Joan, or they could not hate you ; but there is such a feeling about the thing."

"I wonder to hear Augusta Darby, who professes to despise public opinion as the most contemptible, blundering nonsense, declaiming in this way," said Joan, quietly. "It is really very hard upon me, that you will not allow poor me the privilege you claim for yourself. I thought you had set all the *on dits* at defiance."

"I shouldn't mind in the least if they'd talk of you as they do of me,—blaming me for this and that, declaiming against me for this piece of nonsense and extravagance or another,—for while they blame me they envy me and admire me in their hearts, the dear creatures, *I* know. But it's not so with you, Joan : they positively do dislike—and, what is worse, in secret despise you, for being so good ; and, most of all, for these horrid tracts. And now, do you really think all this stuff does do any body the least good in the world ?"

"Yes, my dear, I am simple enough to believe that this stuff, as you call it, does a great deal of

good to a great many people in the world. But what makes you look so pale and weary, my dear Angela? Are you tired? Is the room too close for you?" said Joan, coming up to her with her usual kind solicitude.

"Oh, nothing, nothing," said Angela; but her countenance had fallen.

In spite of the courage she had summoned up, in spite of the apparent ease with which she had answered Miss Darby, her poor heart was sinking with disappointment.

Vavasour was the name of Tom Levet's master, and he was the son of a peer. It was impossible—she had long taught herself to think it impossible, that he and Mr. Carteret should be one; and yet the description Miss Darby gave of her admirer, lover, or whatever one may venture to call the man to whom she thought herself in this equivocal manner engaged, was so like in many respects.

If it did no longer excite hope by the idea that her lover was alive and might be restored to her, it summoned up the most melancholy recollections; recalling those delightful days they had passed together—those drawing-lessons, which were to prove with them not a preparation for the idle employment of a few superfluous hours, but the serious business of life, the providing means of subsistence for themselves and others.

But she roused herself from the painful reverie into which she was falling, and, shaking off these dreary recollections, returned to the business of the present, and, lifting up to her friend and protector as serene and unclouded a countenance as she could command, she said,—

“Have you been so very kind as to prepare Miss Darby for taking a young lady with an encumbrance into her family? You know how much Mrs. Usherwood objected to it, and I am sure she will not have expected such a girl as I am should be burdened with any thing of this sort.”

“An encumbrance, my dear creature!” cried Augusta, opening both her eyes. “La! I hope you haven’t got a horrid husband in a corner, as you professional young ladies, especially when they are very pretty—as in this case—usually have? That would be a damper, I must confess; those professional husbands are often such wretches.”

“No,” said Angela, smiling; “not quite so bad as that. But there are three little children.”

“Why you can’t be a widow?”

“Brothers and sister.”

“Oh, dear! that’s, perhaps, not what mamma will just altogether like. But Donnington is a pretty large house—if we must find an out-of-the-way corner for them, we must.”

“My dear Augusta,” said Miss Grant, “you

cannot seriously suppose, in spite of my tracts and so on, that I was actually proposing to burden you with the two little brothers and sister of Angela Nevil? All that is desired is, that she may be allowed to place them near her, and to visit them and look after them from time to time."

"Heaven bless me! why who could be so unreasonable as to object to it?"

"Some have been found so—and almost to quarrel with Miss Nevil for her generous determination never to forsake them."

"Why, to be sure, you never would forsake them! for they must be poor little orphans, as I know you are one yourself. But I hope you have managed to make guardians or something give you enough to maintain them—for how can you possibly do that?"

"I am afraid I must try," said Angela, in almost a deprecating tone,—Mrs. Usherwood's ideas upon the subject had taught her in this respect to be distrustful,—“but I hope you will not object. I am a very good manager, young as I am,” said she, “and so fond of dress that I shall contrive to appear as I ought to do, and to have plenty for them, out of the very handsome salary you have been so good as to promise me.”

Augusta made no reply: she turned abruptly to the window, and seemed lost in thought.

She stood some time drumming with her hand upon the panes, then she came suddenly back to the table and said, bluntly,—

“And with one miserable hundred pounds you mean to dress yourself and maintain three little children?—quite impossible! utterly impossible!”

“Pray do not say so—pray do not think so!” said Angela, fixing her almost imploring eyes, into which the tears were fast rising, upon her face; “indeed I can do it quite easily. I will not—they shall not be the least burden upon you.”

“Burden upon *me*!—And I, who spend between two and three hundred a-year upon my dress alone, and who never have thought what others did, nor how others were living! I! a strong, bouncing, healthy girl, wasting every hour of my life in pleasure, and spending every pound of my income in the vainest indulgences! And you! so delicate—so slender—so fragile—so young! Oh, Joan Grant! oh, good Mr. M'Dougal! what a contrast! But why didn't you tell me at once, Joan?” she went on; “it wasn't like you—indeed it was not! Why did you not ask for two hundred—three hundred? you should have had it.”

“Because one hundred was a very handsome sum for your guardians to pay,” replied Joan; “and because Angela thinks—and she thinks

rightly—that her necessities afford no claim to impose upon the liberality of others. One hundred a-year is a very handsome salary for one so young to obtain. But we have talked the matter over, and the abundance of time which she will have at her command while with you will enable her to use her pencil to her own advantage; and I have promised to endeavour to dispose of her drawings. I hope by this means she will be able to accumulate a little fund against the time when the education of her brother must begin. So you see I am not nearly so uncalculating as you think, Augusta.”

Augusta stood again silent for a little time.

Then she went up to Angela, and taking her hand said,—

“I will do every thing that lies in my power to make you happy and comfortable. I have a hot, unmanageable, undisciplined temper, I know; I am a haughty, self-willed, violent creature. You will have a vast, vast deal to forgive in me, every day in my life,—but I will try never to forget what you are, and what I am. And I don’t behave so very, very badly to those I honour and esteem: do I, Joan Grant?—do I, Mr. M’Dougal?”

Mr. M’Dougal’s eyes were glistening as he looked at her. And Angela turned towards her a countenance bright and glowing with a pleasure

that for months—I might almost say years—she had never felt.

The delight to her young girlish heart to find such a warm heart ready to respond to hers,—to obtain a friend of her own age, where she had only hoped to find a patroness and a protector,—perhaps only something in the shape of one of the Miss Usherwoods, the only young ladies with whom her limited experience had suffered her to become acquainted.

Her heart almost danced with delight at this prospect.

A young girl is so happy in a young girl's friendship,—and she was so certain she had found a friend.

“And as for these little children,” Miss Darby went on, “I know the very thing for them. There's a remarkably pretty lodge at the east gate,—lodges are usually ugly, or very inconvenient pretences to fine things, but this is quite an exception. It's the very one that foolish old nurse of ours once lived in, that was such a goose as to marry Tom Levet, and it was made really comfortable by mamma on purpose for her; and your children, dear Angela,—do let me call you Angela at once,—shall have it (I suppose you have got a nurse with them): and

there they will have a little garden, and chicken pens, and rabbit pens, and all that nonsense which children and old women are so fond of,—and you can run down and see them twenty times a-day if you like. Won't that do, Miss Grant?"

"My dearest Augusta!" said Joan, and she took her hand and pressed it,—and said no more.

While Augusta turned her face, full of unaffected pleasure towards her, she read that approbation of which she was so proud in Joan Grant's eye, and answered it by the throbbing of her own warm heart.

"And now," she said, "that's all settled. And when can you come away? for I believe mamma means to leave town early in next week."

"Oh, I shall be quite ready," said Angela. "You are so very, very good, I cannot thank you as I ought to do. You do not know—you cannot guess—how happy you make me."

"Well, we'll bundle up all your little baggage, and it shall follow as soon as possible. We shall have to whitewash, and paint, and paper, and glaze, to get ready for them; but we shall be very busy, and have soon done. Did you ever paper a room?—I have. We shall find it charming work providing for our young family."

Angela's smiles were now almost as bright as her own.

“But I shall be dying to see the children,—where are they?”

“They are living in a very obscure street in a very dull part of this great town, poor little things.”

“I hope they’re pretty—I do so hate ugly children,” said Augusta, thoughtlessly: “they are such horrid things! Don’t you think so? Well, to-morrow I shall come down in the carriage early, and we’ll go and see them together. Now I must go out in the Park with mamma.”

And away she went.

“I should so like—I should so like . . .” hesitated Angela.

“What should you like, my dear?”

“If it were possible, if I could contrive it, just to get down to ——— Street, and tell Nurse who is coming to see the children, that she might put them on their best frocks, poor little things, and make them look as nice as they could before Miss Darby sees them. They are so pretty when they are made nice; but children look so badly all in the rough, little dears.”

“That you shall by all means do, my dear girl,” said Joan. “I will take you down this afternoon myself. They are, fortunately, remarkably pretty, interesting children, and will quite

complete the conquest you have begun over Miss Darby's heart."

"She's a fine, warm-hearted creature!" said Mr. M'Dougal. "I had a suspicion that there was much more good in her than she let appear."

"And I already see the beginning of all the good I anticipated for her in a friendship with my Angela," said Miss Grant. "Her character is more susceptible of right-impressions than that of any one I almost ever knew; unluckily, it has not been her good fortune to be subjected often to such. You will see she will take almost as much pleasure in these children as you do yourself, Angela."

"I did not think I could ever be so very happy, dear, dear Miss Grant!"

But you will imagine, and it would be tedious for me to enlarge upon her gratitude or her happiness.

CHAPTER XVII.

But come, thou goddess fair and free,
In heaven yclept Euphrosyne,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth.

EARLY the next morning—that is, early for so fine a lady as she was—Miss Darby, in a light, elegant little carriage of her own, arrived at Miss Grant's door.

She ran lightly up stairs, opened the door of the sitting-room herself, and, without being announced, came in.

Mr. M'Dougal and Angela were there alone.

“Here I am, my dear Miss Nevil. Are you ready equipped to go and see our children?—*our* children that are henceforward to be? I am quite impatient to become acquainted with them. I like children, particularly little boys,—they are such droll little rebels.”

“Miss Darby looks handsomer than ever this

morning," said Mr. M'Dougal, who was sitting, as usual, in his arm-chair by the fire, his hands upon his knees, watching, with his still shrewd eye, what was going on, and gazing with an expression of great admiration and pleasure at her very handsome face, now full of that cheerful good humour which results from a really warm and generous heart when engaged in a kind action. "I hope she will not run away without shaking hands with me."

"No, to be sure!" cried she, running up to him. "But make haste, for I am upon a new hobby; and then, you know of old, nothing can stop me. Come, Angela, are you quite ready?"

"In a moment," said Angela, who was engaged in copying a paper for Miss Grant. "I have only a few more lines to finish, if you will have the goodness to wait for me."

"Joan Grant! Where *is* Joan Grant to-day?" said Augusta. "She would let you off, I'm sure; and I am in such a fidget to be gone."

"I am so sorry," said Angela, whose fingers, too, were twitching with impatience; "but I would not—I could not—leave any thing undone that could be of service to Miss Grant, you know."

"To be sure not! We none of us could bear to shew the least particle of indifference to the least shadow of a behest from Joan Grant; so

write away. I am quite as bad, or quite as good, as she is, Mr. M'Dougal, about Joan Grant," said she, going up to the fire again. "Now, I wonder what that woman's gone out about, at this hour of the day?"

"Perhaps about an errand of kindness," said Mr. M'Dougal, smiling upon her, "like some very fashionable young ladies of my acquaintance."

"I wish the fashionable young ladies of your acquaintance may not have more whim than love in their good deeds," said Augusta, candidly; and looking down at Mr. M'Dougal, as there he sat, with much affection and esteem in her countenance, she said, "This room is positively infectious; I should grow as good and loving as any of you, if I often came here."

"Well, the oftener you come in here the better, then; for you make every body loving you come near," said he.

"O, flatterer! false flatterer!" she answered, and with a slight sigh. "O that I could oblige you to make your words good!" and, turning from him, she returned to Angela, who had now finished the paper she had been employed upon, had folded it, and laid it upon the table, and was standing up ready to depart.

"Now for the brats," said Augusta. "Come along!"

“Do you know,” said Miss Darby, gaily, turning to her companion, as soon as, seated in the carriage, they had driven off, “I think nothing on earth was ever so pleasant as we are going to be. I like you so much, I quite long to begin. Two girls of our age, both so clever and handsome as we are—for it’s no use pretending to false humility when we are alone—both inclined to be pleased with each other; one so good and the other so naughty; one so civilised and the other so wild; one who has known so much sorrow and the other,” (a slight cloud passing over her face), “who perhaps has but just begun to taste it—but who has, till now, led such a joyous, careless life—We are going to be real friends, are we not?” and she took Angela’s hand.

Angela could only answer by a smile, but such a smile! It spoke so much happiness, so much gratitude, so much love already.

Yes, already her heart—it was a very young heart, you remember—gave itself up to friendship, as it had done to love, in all the undoubting confidence of generous youth. She had loved and honoured Joan Grant, but as it was a protector, as a parent almost, to be looked up to and revered; she loved her as one loves a mother, a guardian—but here was one of her own age, one she could love with all the delightful, careless ease of

sisterhood. It seemed almost as if the clouds that had darkened her life were about to be all dissipated.

The difference of conditions which mars so many an incipient friendship seemed here done away, partly by the freshness, warmth, and carelessness of Miss Darby's manner ; partly by the consciousness of superior ability upon her own part. Yes, clever and animated as was Augusta, and in spite of the sort of force of character which displayed itself in all she said and did, Angela had that secret consciousness of real superiority, both in courage and genius, which equalises conditions in cases such as this.

She felt that her friendship might prove as valuable to Augusta as Augusta's could be to her. She was far, indeed, from arrogance or conceit ; but she knew the strength and value of her own heart, and she knew that a true friend, such as she should prove, was in every condition of life a treasure of rare price.

Therefore she had, from the first, felt a something within that balanced all Miss Darby's more evident advantages, and restored that equilibrium which must be adjusted some way or other before there can be any very real enjoyment of the social affections.

The love she already felt for Augusta was not

only sweet in itself, but seemed to raise her to the proper level in her own eyes.

“ I never saw such a face as yours is, Angela !” Augusta ran on ; “ it’s a whole history in itself. You do not rattle away as I do, I see ; it does not seem your nature : but no matter, your eyes supply the deficiencies of your tongue.”

“ When I feel very happy, and a great many other feelings which are more than that, it seems to me vain to try to put them into words ; that is one reason,” said Angela.

“ I hope, however, with all your prudence, and that discretion above your years, which dear Joan Grant wrote such a long chapter about to mamma, that you can fall in love at first sight—in friendship as well as in love, I mean. *I can.*”

“ I did not know that I could before, but now I do,” was Angela’s answer.

“ I thought I should not *much* like you, after Joan’s letter. You know, dearest darling, Joan is so *very* wise, that it’s almost formal sometimes ; —I ought not to say ‘ formal.’ Dear Angela, don’t look grave : formal means dealing in forms, which she never, never did : but she keeps one *in* the forms ; that’s what I mean. She has such strict rules of right, has that dear woman. Not the least bit of a white lie ; not the least bit of a backbite,—backbites are such dear, stinging

things! Nothing ill-natured, nothing the least unjust, will that woman tolerate. She leaves the salt and pepper out of the pie I sometimes think, and that's the reason, I have ever thought, that the men wouldn't have her."

"There is another salt of life," thought Angela; but she could not express her ideas in the light pointed way which would alone, she thought, suit the occasion; and any thing in the least approaching to formal morality from her young lips would, she knew, do Augusta much more harm than good. She only said,—

"I don't know how Miss Grant cooks her pie, but I found the taste of it very pleasant."

"You don't ask me about the man that wouldn't have her," said Augusta, looking into her face. "I thought I had caught you there. Now, I'll be whipped if you are not dying of curiosity, only you think it wouldn't be proper and governess-like to confess it. You thought Joan Grant could never have had a love affair; nor I either, I dare say,—you young nineteens are so innocent,—because very likely *you* never had. Oh, you colour! and oh, you turn away your face! Nay, nay, is it so? We will not talk of our own love affairs"—and Augusta sighed again—"better not. And yet, perhaps, there might be a sympathy between us there, too," said she, dropping her voice; "but no, no," seeing Angela look

distressed, "don't be afraid of me, I will not pump you—I would not pain you on that subject for the universe! I used to make such a joke of it—I know better now. Come, where was I?—I was telling you about Joan Grant."

"Perhaps more than Joan Grant would like I should know," said Angela.

"Oh, nonsense! all the world knows it! It's strange how things get out!—it's horrid how things get out!" said Augusta bitterly; "how the most mortifying, the most painful, the most provoking secret histories get out!—things one would rather die than have known. Yes," she went on rapidly, "Joan Grant loved a man who didn't love her. I dare say it's the case in half the love-stories in the world—men are so hard, so indifferent, so heartless! Was it your case? Do forgive me!"

"No," said Angela; "he is dead."

"Dead!" said Augusta, seizing her hand again. "You have wept for him—you are ready to weep for him again—you think yourself, or have thought yourself, the most miserable creature in the agony of your despair. Now haven't you? Oh! you do not know—you cannot guess what you have been spared! But what am I talking about?—Joan Grant. It was a long time before she got over it—some say she never has got over it. It's that has made her so good;

but then she was very good when this stroke fell upon her. Misfortune turns some into angels; others into fiends. It just depends on how they are when it comes upon them; it's like death, it leaves them as it finds them."

"No, I hope not, and I believe not; I should be sorry to think that any one could be the worse for sorrow. Sorrow is such a sacred, holy, I could almost say, strengthening thing," said Angela.

"Yes, yes, as I said, to those who are good before, as you were. I've heard what a noble, brave girl you were, but I didn't know your heart was in mourning while you were struggling as you did, or I should have honoured you still more—honoured you well, I might, for if *my* heart were shipwrecked I know how it would be with me."

"As it ought to be—as it must be—as it should be," said Angela, earnestly.

"Neither as it ought nor as it should, but as it *must* be," was the reply. "I dare say you do not believe in a thousand dreadful things which the knowledge of my own heart and other people's hearts has taught me to believe in. You blessed ones, who seem to be sent into this world under the guardianship of the holy angels, you don't know what it is to have the fiend tugging at you."

Angela turned her eyes upon the impassioned speaker with a look of sad surprise. The face of Augusta was like a beautiful sky, the bright splendour of which is being all suddenly darkened over by lurid clouds, driving here and there before the angry winds.

There was a sudden blackness, as of despair, in her eyes; then she threw herself back in the carriage, closed her eyelids for a few seconds, and, opening them again, laughed and said,—

“Did you ever read ‘Christobel?’”

“Yes,” said Angela, “often.”

“Don’t take me for ~~the~~ lady with the serpent eye; don’t shudder at me, as Christobel did at that horrid, unaccountable being! If I thought I should do you any harm by coming near you, you bright and good one, believe me I would rather die. So don’t think about Christobel.”

“My dear Miss Darby!” laying her hand affectionately upon hers.

“Promise me you won’t, that’s all. There’s a pretty French verse—‘*Je ne suis pas la rose, mais j’ai vecu près d’elle*,’—keep that in your head, sweet Angela, and be as the rose to me. And now, shall I tell you more about Joan Grant?”

“If I have any right to hear.”

“Oh, you dear scrupulous creature! I tell you, poor thing, all the world knows *her* story. And was it not a miserable aggravation? Poor

thing, she had the greatest fool of a mother that ever was born, and she went prattling all the world over about it! I never saw the man—he was the handsomest creature in the universe, they say; and so clever! He went to the bar, and now he's a judge in India. Years and years since they parted, and they have never once met again. But the magnet vibrates to the pole, though thousands of miles away from it; and heart points to heart, depend upon it, Angela. And that heart of hers has never deviated; and it's that I *do* love her dearly for, because, with all her tracts, and abolitions, and teetotalisms, and nonsense, which I do hate so, there's a true woman's heart under all. It's so odd—such a contrast—all that tiresome, mannish sort of business outside, and to think there's a true-love heart behind it all! I do love her for that—it makes one pardon all the rest.”

“Pardon all the rest! Why, who can help honouring her and loving her, almost adoring her, for every bit of the rest?” said Angela, with unfeigned astonishment; but then, recollecting herself, she added, “I believe one must have known what it is to want and suffer before one can justly value those who go about relieving want and suffering.”

Augusta seemed struck with these few words. There was a pause; then she said,—

“When we are better acquainted you shall tell me about want and suffering. Prosperity has made my heart hard—I want experience of these things.”

“Look out,” said Angela.

“Why, what a horrid, detestable part of the town we are coming into! Surely the man can’t be driving right. I never saw such squalid misery—such filthy streets—such abominable houses! None that deserve the name of human beings can live here!”

“Yes but they do, for here lives your old nurse, Mrs. Levet, and here my poor little brothers and sister are imprisoned.”

“Levet live here! What could have brought *her* here?”

“Necessity and drunkenness!”

“And what could have brought you here?”

“Necessity without drunkenness.”

Augusta looked very grave, and as the carriage drove up the wretched street kept her eyes fixed upon the different groups, watching the varied aspects under which want and vice present themselves in such places.

At last, rallying her spirits and turning to Angela, —

“What tricks the imagination plays us! When I heard you were living with Levet, who I remember so neat and trim at Donnington, and her

house and garden quite a miniature paradise, I fancied you in some smart house, with a vine between the windows," said she, laughing. "I was so silly, I thought these horrid places, whenever I have happened to pass through them, could be only the haunts of beggars and thieves—'decent poverty,' as I have heard it called. Oh, I never thought it could come to this!"

"In large towns it does," said Angela; "house-rent, light, water, the very air, one breathes, is so very dear."

"Then why on earth did you—does any one—come into large towns?"

"You forget I had—they have—to get their livings."

"Well, till this moment I always thought that I should rather like to have to get my living. I fancied it must be so entertaining; I never thought it could be a hardship, as I do now."

"So I thought," said Angela; "but people who have not their livings to get should beware of such ideas, lest they grow hard-hearted. I do not mean that to get one's living is a *hardship*,—that would be very wrong to say,—but it is a difficulty."

"An immense, an enormous, an insupportable difficulty! But the carriage stops; this must be the house: let us get to these blessed child-

ren!—I long to get them out of such a hideous place as this!”

“One of Joan Grant’s objects is to get every body out of such hideous places,” said Angela, simply.

“Well, well, a few more of your lessons, and I shall write tracts myself. But here we stop at the door, and there is, if I can believe my eyes, poor Levet herself. But what a pale, lean, dirty, draggletail figure she is!”

“Levet!” as she entered the little shop.

“Miss Darby!” with a scream of joy.

And she was running to embrace her; but suddenly recollecting herself, she cast a hasty glance at her dirty hands and dress, and, falling back, coloured, courtesied, and said,—“I am sure you are very good, ma’am, to come to my poor place.”

“Poor place!—why, it’s a perfect doghole, Levet! Shop!—do you call this wretched dungeon a shop? Why what on earth, Levet, can have brought you to this?”

“Don’t ask me, Miss Darby—pray don’t!” casting an appealing look at Angela. “Not my fault, indeed, except for marrying Tom; and who could have helped that?”

“Tom!—why what on earth could induce you to marry Tom, my good, soft, silly Levet? But I heard of it, and from that day to this I’ve never

forgiven you. Tom Levet, of all creatures upon earth! Well, well, never mind—he's grown as good as gold now!"

"So he tells me," said Mrs. Levet, cheering up.

"I can give you better evidence than his own for that," Augusta went on; "for Master Tom was never famous for a superstitious regard to truth: but he *is* grown steady—no thanks to him for it—but he's got an excellent master in Mr. Vavasour."

"He'd be quite one after yours and Joan Grant's heart," she added, turning to Angela, "as far as his masterhood goes, whatever his other freaks!"

"Oh, Tom tells me he is such a charming young gentleman!" said Mrs. Levet.

"Does he?" said Augusta, sitting down, as if quite forgetting her errand to the children. "What does Tom say of him?"

"That he's so handsome, and so clever, and makes such beautiful pictures, and that every body loves him; but (poor young man!) he doesn't much care for any body. He pines a good deal to himself, Tom thinks; and (poor fellow!) he fancies he's crossed in love."

"What a bear I am to keep you waiting, Angela!" cried Augusta, starting up as if she were stung. "Where are these blessed children?"

Their gladsome voices might be heard at the top of the stairs, calling "Angy, Angy!" but Nurse would not let them come down.

"Well, these are pretty little loves, Angela!"

They were sitting down in the close den of a room, Angela with the baby, now above a year old—Augusta with the two others in her lap. She had soon made friends with both.

Augusta's was one of those bright countenances which all children love.

"I might have let my imagination trot, as regards these children. Why, they are as sweet, and as clean, and as nice, as if they lived in Grosvenor Square! How *do* you contrive it, Mrs. Nurse? Why, who would care for any thing if they could always be so nice? I'm sure I've seen children in grand nurseries not in half such good order."

"Keep outside the curtain, if you please," said Angela, smiling gaily: "I am not going to initiate you all at once into the horrors of the prison-house. All poor children look particularly nice when they are dressed for company—for company comes seldom to him 'who is a stranger even unto his brother.' But I am delighted you think them so pretty—I think them so very pretty myself! But then, they are my own, you know!"

“And mine too!—I cry booty! Why, the babes in the wood were never prettier than this little boy and girl! One can’t look at them without thinking of robin-redbreasts and strawberry leaves. But, you little creatures, what waxy hands and what pale cheeks you have! Where did they get those, Mrs. Nurse?”

“They are delicate little creatures, madam, by nature, and we are obliged to live in too close a place,” said Nurse. “Poor little lambs! one forgets how peaking they look till it strikes a stranger.”

Angela looked at her little ones anxiously, and then at Augusta, with a love and gratitude not to be expressed by words, who said,—

“Well, Mrs. Nurse, that’s all over now: Miss Nevil and I leave town in a day or two—she’s going down with me to Donnington.”

“Donnington!—bless me!” said Nurse, courtesying; “may I be so bold—are you Miss Darby, madam?”

“Neither more nor less; but what do *you* know of Miss Darby?”

“Only through Sarah Levet, madam; she’s an old friend of mine, madam.”

“Is she? Did you ever see her cottage at Donnington?”

“Have I, ma’am? Oh, what a real paradise

of a place it was! And to think of her leaving it for Tom Levet!"

"I am glad you like it. Don't you think that you and the little ones could find room enough in it? You know there are two bed-rooms up stairs, and it's not so *very* small: what do you think, Mrs. Nurse?"

"Think! — think!" — clasping her hands — "think! Why, Miss Darby, that you are an angel, come just in time to save these poor darlings' lives. I wouldn't say any thing—I knew it was no use, and she, my master's eldest daughter, slaving herself to death for us all; but I knew how it must end: these little creatures, born of such delicate parents as my poor master and mistress were, can't bear with it—they cannot. It's no use talking: they will droop and die. Why, Miss Angela, who'd think Master Tommy——why, he's but the merest shadow of what he used to be!"

"Too true, Nurse," said Angela; "but where there was no remedy, I dared not think of it."

"Well, we may all talk of it and think of it now," said Augusta, "for we're going down in three days, and we shall paste, and paper, and paint, and be all ready for you in a week or two; so pack up your alls, Mrs. Nurse, and be ready too. And now, little ones, put on your hats and bon-

nets: you don't mind being crowded, Angela, and I'm sure I don't; and let us take them into the Park for a drive. I am sorry there's not room for Mrs. Nurse, or we would take the baby; he looks paler than any of them."

"May I carry him on my lap?" said Angela. "Poor little fellow, it would do him such a world of good!"

"Why, yes, if it won't tire you."

"Tire me!—oh, it won't tire *me*!"—casting upon her another of those grateful, loving looks, that went straight to Augusta's heart.

"And I have not done one single thing for herself, after all!" thought Augusta. "Only for these children!"

"Come, little baggages, get ready!—we'll blow them about famously, Angela!"

You have all of you hearts.

I need not describe what Angela felt, as, sitting side by side, both busy with the children—one not more engaged than the other—they drove into the pleasant Park.

Augusta seemed quite to have recovered her spirits, and was as gay and merry as ever; and Angela was happier than she had been for a very long time.

The happiness of the one arose from the consciousness that, could Vavasour see her now, he would no longer regard her with his usual indifference — that, for one who was so kind in his feelings, the pleasure she was now bestowing upon the unfortunate would not be without its value. True kindness of heart had prompted her actions, yet there was this delightful return upon herself; and to a person so governed by her imagination, the visionary future was almost as vivid as a reality.

Angela was singularly happy, because she was *very* happy; and she had not been happy for such a long time.

To sit and chat with Augusta, and hear her chat, was a great enjoyment; to have these poor little things inhaling the fresh air, and enjoying the gay sights they passed with a pleasure known only to childhood, was perfect felicity.

They returned home by the Bazar, into which Augusta insisted upon taking the children, while Angela remained in the carriage with baby. She returned with them, their little hands loaded with presents, and her own filled with rattles and every sort of noisy thing for the youngest.

And so they drove home in a Babel of discordant sounds; baby shaking his rattle, Tommy drumming his drum, Lucy making her little white pug-dog bark, till they were deafened. Augusta

laughed aloud ; and Angela, the only silent one, was the happiest of all.

They restored the children to Nurse, and then they returned to New Norfolk Street, where Augusta, having fixed the day but one after the next for leaving town, shook hands heartily with her new friend, and departed better pleased with herself, and in more really good spirits, than she had known since Mr. Vavasour's arrival at Palermo.

“ You look quite a different creature, my dear Angela ! ” said Joan Grant, as she entered the room, her pale cheek once more bright with the colour of health, her eye sparkling, and her step elastic. “ I hope you have had a pleasant morning.”

The kindness she had received during her long illness from the hand of this admirable woman, had placed them, by this time, quite upon the most intimate and affectionate terms. It was as a young daughter goes up to a mother she loves, honours, and fears at once, that Angela ever approached her : she had no disguises for Joan ; with her she felt assured of sympathy and protection in every difficulty. Still the difference

of their age and circumstances rendered it impossible that Miss Grant could impart that gay sensation of ease and enjoyment which a few hours of Augusta's company had afforded.

Joan knew this well, and was far too just, too really benevolent, to feel any thing but pleasure in observing it.

Angela came and sat down by her at the writing-table, where she was busy, and said,—

“I am so excessively obliged to you. I like her so exceedingly. She has so much pity, so much generosity, and such a charming frankness of temper, I seem quite to love her already.”

“I thought I did well for you, my love, when I placed you in her hands. Augusta has her faults, which Angela will find out in due time, and know how to overlook, in favour of as good and honest a heart as ever beat in a human bosom. But you know,” said she, smiling, “you are to be the little governess—don't forget *that*—you are to counsel as a friend while you love as a sister, remember.”

“I shall do the last easily; but I am so young for the first. I counsel! Oh, no!”

“Yes, but you will, because you will soon find that it is due to loyalty, truth, and honour, to say many a little thing, which if I did not feel sure you would have the strength of mind when

the occasion required it to say, much as I love you, I would never have recommended you to Augusta Darby."

This seemed so strange to Angela; with the usual modesty of a fine mind, she had a very humble opinion of the extent of her own powers.

She compared herself with an idea of perfection formed by her imagination; and as her own performances fell so far short of this ideal, she never considered whether others did better or worse.

"Miss Darby!" said Angela, laughing; "she will be much more ready to counsel me than I her!"

"So you think now; but you are quite clever enough to find out what is wanting, without my taking upon myself the very ungracious part of pointing out Miss Darby's defects; which, after all, will interfere with her own happiness rather than yours, my dear, I hope. And now let me ring for your arrow-root, and go and lie down, for the excitement of this morning has made you look very bright; but that dear hand is trembling, nevertheless, like an aspen."

And Angela, at rest in spirit, sheltered by this kind being, like a child upon its mother's bosom, went up stairs to throw herself upon the bed, and once more in her life, like a child, fall into a sweet and untroubled slumber.—

And Joan took up the newspaper which she had been eagerly reading, but which she had laid down to talk with Angela.

It was a "Calcutta Gazette," and contained a speech which the Chief Justice had delivered at Bombay — a speech such as echoes from one hemisphere to the other, and awakens a sympathetic feeling throughout the world. Some great cause of humanity connected with our dealings with our multitudinous fellow-subjects in that eastern empire — some cause in which the rights of the defenceless were in question, had elicited it; and Joan, with swelling heart and humid eyes, had read and re-read every syllable.

It was not the universal admiration with which this rare expansion of eloquence had been received; it was the righteous heart which breathed in every line — the upright judge, and tender, benevolent man, thus displayed in every syllable, that sent the blood to her cheek, and cast a softness of untold joy over that usually serene but somewhat severe countenance.

But she had laid it down to welcome and to interest herself about Angela; and now she took it up and read it again and again.

Before entering upon the new scene of action,

it seems proper to revert to that letter which Angela wrote to Mrs. Whitwell at the Great Ash Farm by Miss Grant's advice, and inquire what came of it.

Nothing came of it.

In due course of time the letter was returned, with "Not to be found here," upon it. And in answer to another, written while she was living with Joan Grant, to inquire what had become of the last tenants, and whether there were any letters for her, an answer was returned, that the present holder of the farm knew nothing about them, and that no letters to her address were lying there.

This had scarcely been a disappointment, so little had she built upon it; but it was a satisfaction to find that all that could have been done was done.

And now, restored by Miss Grant's kindness and care, behold her upon a somewhat chilly, but sunny day, in the latter end of April, preparing to quit London and set out for Donnington, the seat of Mr. Darby.

END OF VOL. II.



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